Ethnic-Based Discrimination and Employee Work Attitudes in the Nigerian Public Service

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Abstract
Organizational behaviour literature is satiated with scholarly renditions on the association between workplace discrimination and employee work attitudes. Yet, it appears that employee negative job attitude is on the increase among Nigeria public servants. This study seeks to establish the influence of ethnic-based discrimination on employee work attitudes in the Nigeria Civil Service. Data was collected from Civil Servants working with the Rivers State Civil Service and tested using Kendall_tau Correlation Coefficient. The results indicated that ethnic-based discrimination leads to increase in employee incivility and a decrease in employee involvement. Among the recommendations was that recruitment and selection into the Civil Service be based on competence and capability, not on ethnic background. Also, promotion in the civil service should be based on individual's contribution and performance not ethnic jingoism so as to encourage positive attitudes from workers.
Keywords: Ethnic-based discrimination, employee work attitudes, employee involvement, employee incivility

1. Introduction

Employee work attitude is gaining global attention. Recently, a lot of management writings have been devoted to understanding the impact of employee work attitudes in the organisation and its outcomes (e.g. Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004; Kivimaki, Vanhala, & Pentti, 2007). Though employees do not always display negative work attitudes such as incivility, and withdrawal behaviours, they sometime show positive attitudes such as involvement, commitment and satisfaction.

The growing consciousness on workers attitudes has generated considerable intellectual concerns, with diverse approaches, orientations and dispositions. However, the central theme which appears to drive any study in this sphere is that, negative inclination or positive dispositions on issues in the firm manifest into overt outcomes that have dysfunctional or functional behaviours, respectively. For instance, Ahiazu and Asawo (2014) conducted an intellectual inquiry on economic meltdown, impact on psychological contract and workers commitment in productive firms in Nigeria, and established inverse relationship. This simply translates that the adversities of the economic meltdown created negative attitude amongst the staff, which causes psychological contract breaches and diminishing commitment.

In the Nigerian civil service, the effect of the negative employee work attitudes is displayed in the form of inefficiency and ineffectiveness in their work process, and poor standard of output (Salisu, 2001; Eme & Ugwu, 2011). Also, civil servants seem to be displaying feasible obstinacy against government businesses, yet they do not quit. Commitment therefore, looks elusive and grossly and unimaginably low, and there seems to be an excruciating attainment of employee intention to quit (Agwu, 2013; Orogbu, Onyeizugbe, Onwuzuligbo & Agu, 2016; Olori & Dan-Jumbo, 2017).

Several dispositions and positions on this phenomenon blame it on lack of inspiration on the part of politicians, who are always on career transit, carrying little or nothing of the destiny of the government establishments, which they head (Eme & Ugwu, 2011). Others blame it on "lack of training and career development", which tends to frustrate the career prospects of government workers (Oyedeji, 2016). Yet, a perspective that touches on the nucleus (Salisu, 2001; Oyedeji, 2016). Neutrality of government has it that the constant interaction between these employees and partisan politicians appear to have eroded their 'non-partisanism' given away to unhealthy workplace discrimination.

This work attempt to understand employee work attitudes in the Nigerian public service and the impact ethnic-based discrimination has on the attitudes displayed by the civil servants. The Rivers State Civil Service is adopted as study site.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Theoretical Framework

Several theories from social psychology and other behavioural science backgrounds have been adopted in management and organisational behaviour research. Some of these theories have been used in explaining employee work attitudes and its relationship with perceived workplace discriminations. Prominent among these theories are equity theory, social categorization theory, relative deprivation theory, social identity theory, and similarity-attraction theory.

In terms of "equity theory" it is believed that when employees feel that the rewards and recognition they are

getting from their institutions is at par with that of their peers and contemporaries in similar institutions, they feel obliged to respond with increase commitment, engagement and involvement (Adams, 1963). In this work, the theoretical foundation is based on Stacy Adam's Equity.

Equity Theory (Adams, 1963)
The Equity Theory is among the prominent human motivation theories. It is a tool used in organizational behaviour and management psychological research to explain employee reaction to issues of compensation and other benefits. It attempts to understand and explain how to address issues of equal and unequal treatments in organisations (e.g. Huseman, Hatfield & Miles, 1987; Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2012; Aidla, 2013).

The equity theory is premised on the proposition that impartiality and fairness are core motivational factors of employees. Adams (1963) observed that "individuals are motivated by fairness, and if they identify inequities in the input or output ratios of themselves and their referent group, they will seek to adjust their input to reach their perceived equity" (p, 423).

The prevailing manner equity theory occurs in the workplace, is the employee comparison of the work done and the pay received to that of colleague(s) who gets bigger pay. According to Hawks (2018) is detected any moment a worker complains that "John gets paid a lot more than me, but doesn't do nearly as much work," or "I get paid a lot less than Jane, but this place couldn't operate without me". These situations involved people examining their accomplishment-to-reward and matches it to the efforts and compensation given to colleagues doing similar, lesser job.

The theory holds that, workers get involve in counterproductive or repugnant job behaviours such as withdrawal behaviour, procrastination and other delay tactics and total absent from work. Also, there is upsurge in the level of incivility and unsportsmanlike behaviour (Restubog, Hornsey, Bordia, & Esposo, 2008; Cappelen, et al., 2014).

Industrial and organisational theorists have demonstrated the applicability of the equity theory in the organizational settings and used it to demonstrate the link between workers perceived inequality (discrimination) and attitudes (Aidla, 2013). The concept of equality cannot be separated from the idea of justice. Likewise, equality and discrimination are two sides of a coin (Goldstone, 2006). At any point in time, a discriminatory act is committed then there is violation of the doctrine of equality (White, 1997).

2.2 Conceptualising Ethnic-based Discrimination
In Nigeria, discrimination and partisanship in the workplace are complex, overlapping and systemic. Untangling such composite inequalities and discriminatory practices is clearly a difficult task that has no predetermined answers (Fudge, 2009). Especially, as it pertains to ethnic-based discrimination which is a great concerned to academia and general policy administrators.

A lot of efforts have been asserted to reduce ethnic-based inequality in the workplace by management scholars and experts (Warr, 1994). These have resulted to upsurge of scholarly articles, seminar papers, and presentations on this subject matter. Ethnic-based discrimination has been shown to negatively affect job satisfaction, work involvement, commitment and several other work outcomes (Sattar & Nawaz, 2011). Contrada, et al (2000, 2001) define ethnic discrimination as unfair treatment earned because of an individual's ethnicity. These authors also defined ethnicity as groupings of persons based on notions of race or culture of origin. Ethnic discrimination also known as racism can involve "stigmatization, exclusion, social distancing, harassment, or violence and other acts" (Contrada, et al., 2001; Krieger, 1999).

Ethnic-based discrimination is a ubiquitous problem (Dion, 2002) and a health-eroding variable in the lives of ethnic minorities (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002). Karlsen and Nazroo (2002) studied health institutions and observed that racial minorities suffer more from ethnic related injustices in the corporation and the minority ethnic groups have more physical and psychiatric symptoms and problematic health behaviours than the predominant group (Brondolo, et al., 2003).

Although institutional level ethnic-based discrimination (e.g., segregation) appears to be in the larger social context in which minority differential morbidity is elicited and maintained (Darity, 2003; Nazroo, 2003), individual-level experiences is gradually taking centre stage (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Bird & Bogart, 2001), and plays affect targeted person or group negatively (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). For instance, health sector research reveals that ethnic discrimination is intertwined with poor physical and psychological wellbeing for African-Americans (Clark, et al., 1999); for several different Hispanic ethnic minority groups (Noh, et al., 1999; Contrada, et al., 2001; Brondolo, et al., 2003, 2005); and for a variety of Asian ethnic minority groups (LeClere et al., 1997; Noh, et al., 1999; Loo, et al., 2001; Lee, 2003; Noh & Kaspar, 2003) in the U.S. and Canada. Such consistent findings across this diversity of ethnic minority groups underscore the significance of ethnic-based discrimination to minority groups and individuals and so the need to assess it in the Nigerian public sector.

Moreover, greater share of the studies on ethnic-based discrimination were conducted in the western world with the USA having the lion share of quantitative literature (e.g. Brondolo, et al., 2000; 2003). The manner in

which discrimination was measured in the aforementioned studies varied with the ethnic group under investigation, with studies rarely using the same measure, consequently, the need to study this phenomenon in the Nigerian work environment.

2.3 Employee involvement

Another worker positive workplace attitude is involvement. It is general believed that towering levels of involvement reflects higher levels of worker positive attitudes towards their job, leader and institution (Kuye & Sulaimon, 2011). Worker involvement usually is cited as "participative decision-making", it pertains to the extent that workers influence or participate within the methods and processes within the firm (Mitchell, 1973). Locke and Schweiger (1979) outline it as "joint decision making" between corporate leaders and subordinates. Likewise, Noah (2008) expounds it as the degree of delegation through which subordinates gain larger management skills, larger freedom with reference to bridging the knowledge flow between the heads/owners and also the employees.

Employee involvement shows the degree that employees participate within the strategic designing activities. The degree of involvement is high or low degree. An amazing degree of involvement (deep worker involvement in determining actions) suggests that all classes of employees are carried on in the business designing procedures. Conversely, a low degree of involvement (shallow worker involvement) shows a reasonably exclusive designing method (Barringer & Bleudorn, 1999) involving individuals at the strategic level of the firm. A deep worker participation permits the opinions of the frontline employees and different lower level employees call method. Fortuitously, the frontline individuals are nearer to the shoppers and purchasers, thus simply gets feedback on a way to improve and facilitate higher product and services, a crucial side within the entrepreneurial method (Li. et al., 2006). This means that employee participation in the planning process surrounding the potential innovations may facilitate opportunity recognition throughout the organization (Kemelgor, 2002; Zivkovic, et al., 2009).

The attitudes that organizational results come from the hierarchy, that effective cultures are derived from the upper echelon, often tend to ignore the usefulness and suggestions of those at the lower levels (Woodworth, 1986). Thus, not have the gains and benefits inherent in brainstorming.

Among the well adopted definition of job involvement is that by Wood (1996), that expounds it as the possibility of an individual to work assiduously beyond traditional job expectations. Additionally Newstrom and Davis (1997) outline it as "the degree to that workers immerse themselves in their jobs, invest time and energy in them, and look at work as a central a part of their overall lives".

According to Singh, Gupta and Venugopal (2008) job involvement is a person's resolution to go beyond what is expected of his or her role in the organisation. An employee with low involvement sees his or her work as a way to survive. Therefore, motivation comes from the very fact that he should perform his task description to be paid. However, extremely involve individual gets inner joy from the task he or she is doing and can merrily appreciate opportunity to innovate and new avenues to perform.

Lastly, within the words of Newstrom and Davis (1997), Job concerned workers are "likely to believe the work ethic, exhibit desire for high growth, and to fancy participation in deciding. As a result, they rarely are unpunctual or absent, they are caning to work long hours and that they will conceive to be high performers".

2.4 Employee Incivility

In social business science literature, there is upsurge appeal in general workplace incivility (e.g., Andersson, & Wegner, 2001; Cortina, et al, 2001; Lim, et al, 2008; Pearson, et al 2009). Employee incivility shows impolite and unmannered behavior with a clear intent to hurt the victim.

Employee incivility is defined as low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to hurt the sufferer, in violation of workplace norms for common respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Employee incivility refers to uncivil work attitudes that are characteristically rude and impertinent, disregarding others and stated down rules and regulations directing the activities of the corporation. However, in a situation that the inflamer intends to torment the targeted employee or organization, the uncivil conduct constitutes psychological aggression (e.g., Baron, 2004; Neuman, 2004). For behaviour to qualify as incivility, however, any harmful intent must be ambiguous to any of the persons involved (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, et al., 2009).

Incivility may be ambiguous, but its effects are not. Individuals targeted with uncivil work behavior report greater job-related stress, distraction, and dissatisfaction; lower creativity and cooperation. Over time, they lose commitment to their organizations and quit at higher rates (Pearson, et al 2000; Pearson, et al., 2001; Cortina, et al., 2001; Cortina, et al., 2002; Pearson & Porath, 2004; Lim, et al., 2008).

The aftermath of workplace incivility is destructive to the well being of the business. Scholars observed that even employees who only experience incivility second hand (e.g., witnessing the maltreatment of colleagues) show lower job satisfaction and commitment and greater job burnout and turnover intentions (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004, 2007; Lim, et al., 2008). Cortina (2008) observes that there are adverse consequences of incivility

including financial implications for employers, who must absorb the costs of employee distraction and discontentment, job accidents, substance abuse, sick leave, work team conflict, productivity decline, and turnover.

Incivility, intention to quit and other forms of negative workplace attitudes by employees have a lot in common. Each attitude is antagonistic; degrades, offends, or intimidates; and violate standards of interpersonal respect. In addition, Cortina (2008) argues that these attitudes blend together at times. This may seem illogical, given that incivility is neutral on its surface.

2.5 Empirical Review

Studies on the relationship between ethnic - related discrimination is on the increase. This may due to the perceived negative effects of ethnic-based discrimination in the corporate world (Adja-kwaku, Addae, Nkansah & Appiah, 2013; Triana, Jayasinghe & Pieper, 2015). Among the different types of discrimination in the Police Service in Ghana, Adja-kwaku, et al (2013) found that, ethnic-based discrimination is most prominent as it has the highest number of occurrence with thirty eight percent. This was followed by gender related discrimination with twenty four percent occurrence rate. Other forms of discrimination reported by the scholars were sexual harassment and sexual orientation. Adja-kwaku, et al (2013) observed that "discrimination hurts everybody in its path", and it "diminishes human capital whiles creating a hostile work environment for the employers and employees". That is, discrimination notwithstanding its nature or form results to negative work outcomes and discourages diversity in the workplace thereby diminishing the level of creativity and innovation.

In a recent study, Triana, et al., (2015) corroborated this observation by examining "perceived discrimination and employees' work attitudes" and submit that shallow level of discrimination increases employees intention to quit. Earlier, Triana, et al (2010) studied the existing relationship between "perceived racial discrimination and affective commitment" among differences races in the USA and found a corresponding result. Similarly, Ensher, et al (2001) probed the "effects of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior". They observed that perceived workplace discrimination adversely influence the attitudes of employees which in turn affect their outputs. Perceived workplace discrimination negatively influence job satisfaction and results in grievances.

In a study in Rivers State Civil Service, Olori and Dan-Jumbo (2017) established the connection among different facets of workplace discrimination age, gender and ethnic-based and worker commitment, they found a negative correlation among the dimensions with worker commitment. Indicating that the stronger the perceived level of inequality in the Civil Service, the lower the level of civil servants commitment. This finding by Olori and Dan-Jumbo (2017) is in concordant with several precious studies (e.g. Triana, et al, 2010; Triana, et al, 2015).

2.6 Hypotheses Development

The review of sizeable number of empirical studies above (e.g. Adja-kwaku, Addae, Nkansah & Appiah, 2013; Triana, Jayasinghe & Pieper, 2015), there appears to be abundant corroboration among the scholars on the negative effects of ethnic-based discrimination on positive employee job attitudes. While Olori and Dan-Jumbo (2017) concluded that workplace discrimination adversely induce employee job attitude. In a related study, Estes and Wang (2008) found that prejudice, bullying, emotional abuse and other forms of discriminatory practices often result to incivility. Equivalently, Pearson and Porath (2005) state that "employees experiencing incivility at work intentionally reduced their work effort and spent work time telling coworkers about the incident and avoiding the instigator". From the discussion above the research model below was developed with the accompanying hypotheses:

Conceptual Model
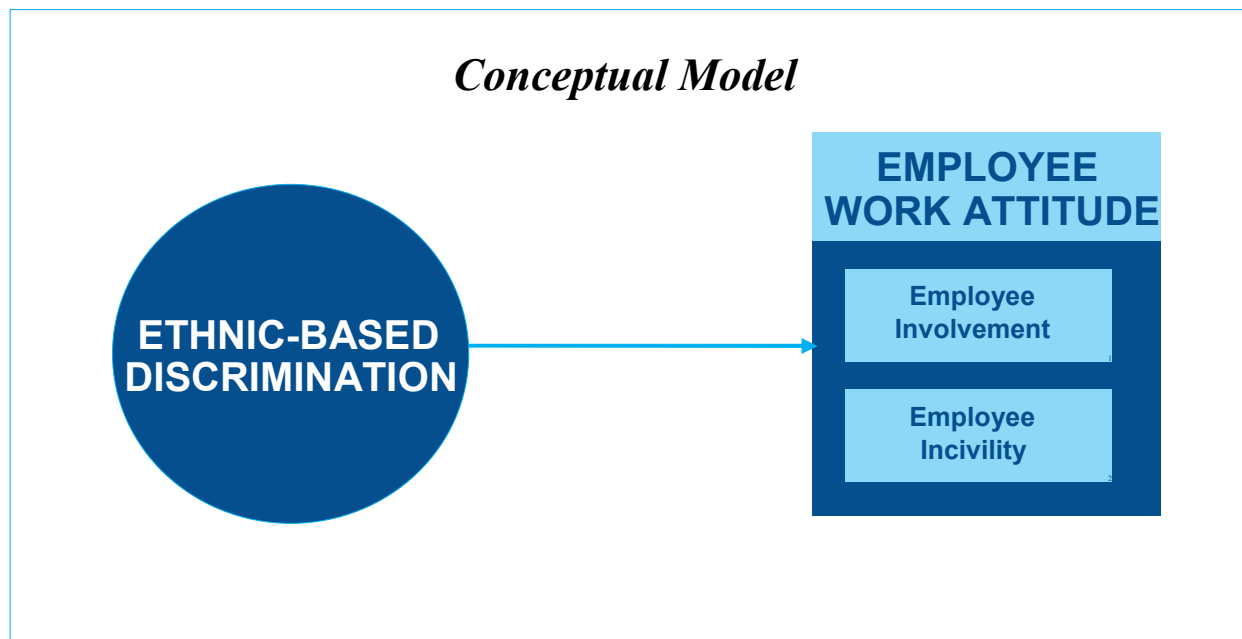
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between ethnic-based discrimination and employee involvement.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between ethnic-based discrimination and employee incivility.

3. Methods

3.1 Participants and Procedures

This is an observational study, using the cross-sectional survey design. Unlike other types of observational study designs in the cross-sectional survey design, the scholar examines the outcome and exposes the research participants at the same period (Setia, 2016). The population of the study comprises 51,371 employees working the 75 parastatals under the Rivers State Civil Service. A nominal sample of 397 was obtained using Taro Yamen's formula.

Four hundred copies of the questionnaire were randomly administered to civil servants in the Rivers State Civil Service. Out of which 198 were properly filled and returned, signifying a 49.5 percent returned rate.

3.2 Instruments

The survey instrument comprised three sections. The opening section inquires about the demographic details of the participants, followed by statement items on age-based discrimination. While statement items on employee involvement and incivility comes last. The questionnaire has a total --- statement items shared into the three sections. A letter of introduction was sent to the directors of the parastatals to inform them about the study and the benefits their agencies stand to gain from it. Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher after obtaining consent from the directors.

Ethnic-based discrimination

To describe ethnic-based discrimination a scale comprising nine items was adopted from Gonzales, et al (2015) and Jagusztyn (2010) and modified to suit the Nigerian civil service environment. Among the items include "I have been treated unfairly by employers, bosses, or supervisors because of my ethnicity", and "I have been treated unfairly by coworkers or colleagues because of my ethnicity". The scale returned a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.872.

Employee involvement

To measure employee involvement a scale made up of nine items was adopted with items such as "I usually show up for work a little early, to get things ready", "I have feelings of guilt regarding unfinished work and absenteeism" and "I participate in setting the goals and objectives for my job". These items were adopted from Lodahl and Kejner (1965), cited in Setar, Buitendach and Kanengoni (2015). The scale returned a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.782.

Employee incivility

Employee incivility was measured with 6 statement items scale, including "My colleagues often raised their voice while speaking to you", "My colleagues generally spoke to you in an aggressive tone of voice" and "I feel been down or was condescending on by my colleagues". These items were adopted from Cortina, Magley, Williams and Langhout (2001). The scale returned a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.893.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Instrument Validity and Reliability

The reliability of the survey instrument was confirmed through the means of Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability values. The output displayed in table 1 below adduce that each of the constructs are reliable since they met the agreeable baseline of 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014).

Table 1: Construct Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	ED	EJI	EI
AD	0.872	0.912	0.677	**0.823**		
EJC	0.782	0.917	0.689	0.563	**0.830**	
EIQ	0.893	0.929	0.726	0.334	0.419	**0.852**
Note: AVE = Average Variance Extracted, ED = Ethnic-based Discrimination, EJI = Employee Job Involvement, EI = Employee Incivility .						

Further, the validity of the constructs was confirmed through average variance extracted and item inter-correlation which takes care of convergent and discriminant validity. In table 1 above, the AVEs values are above 0.5 threshold given by Fornell abd Larcker (1981) and Bagozzi and Yi (1988) for convergent validity. Furthermore, the square roots of the AVEs were of greater value in comparison to correlations among latent variables, justifying the condition for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using Kendall_tau correlation coefficient. The 198 copies of the questionnaire that were correctly filled and returned are used for the final analyses as reported in the table below:

Hypotheses 1 and 2:

The hypotheses stated that: There is no significant relationship between ethnic-based discrimination and the measures of employee work attitudes (employee involvement and employee incivility).

Table 2: Correlations between Ethnic-based discrimination, employee involvement and employee job commitment

			Ethnic-based Discrimination	Employee Job Involvement	Employee Incivility
Kendall's tau_b	Ethnic-based Discrimination	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.613	.550
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.008	.005
		N	264	264	264
	Employee Job Involvement	Correlation Coefficient	-.613	1.000	.053
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.	.009
		N	264	264	264
	Employee Incivility	Correlation Coefficient	.550	.053	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.009	.
		N	264	264	264

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results shown in table 2 above, indicating a moderate but inverse relationship between ethnic-based discrimination and employee involvement with Kendall_tau value of -.613, pv < .05. Therefore, the first hypothesis stating that, ethnic-based discrimination has no significant relationship with employee involvement was rejected. In line with the first hypothesis, the analysis showed that, ethnic-based discrimination is positively correlated with employee incivility with tau = .550 and pv < .05. Consequently, the second hypothesis was rejected.

4.2 Discussions

The study examines the relationships between ethnic-based discrimination and the measures of employee work attitude (employee involvement and employee incivility). The analysis of ethnic-based and employee involvement showed a significant but negative relationship. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore an increase in the ethnic-based discrimination in the public service will result to decrease in the level of workers involvement. While decrease in ethnic-based discrimination will results to higher levels of employee involvement.

This discovery finds commonality with the studies of Becker (1980), Pearson and Porath (2004), Buchanan & Fitzgerald (2009), amongst others. Becker (1980) studied "Perceived discrimination, work attitudes, and labor market experience" in the USA. He averred that when minority (black) feel discriminated they exhibit

unproductive work attitudes, however an equitable work environment lead to positive feelings which reflect in their level of involvement and productivity. Similarly, Becker and Hills (1981) cited in Mays, Coleman and Jackson (1996) opine that "black men who perceived work outcomes to be contingent on their behavior had more positive feelings about work. Additionally, Ensher, et al (2001) probed the influence of perceived discrimination on employee job outcomes and conclude that discrimination discourages positive work attitudes such as organizational citizenship behaviour and involvement.

The outcome of the analysis between ethnic-based discrimination and incivility shows a significant and positive correlation. Meaning the more discrimination thrive in the civil service, the more employees will display negative attitudes such as incivility, rudeness, discourteousness and challenge their superiors. This finding corroborates the submission of Pearson and Porath (2004) who submit that "employees experiencing incivility at work intentionally reduced their work effort and spent work time telling coworkers about the incident and avoiding the instigator". Also, Lim and Cortina (2005) who studied workplace incivility found a positive correlation between discrimination and incivility.

5   Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations
This article examines the correlation between ethnic-based discrimination and employee work attitudes. Employee work attitude was studied in terms of employee involvement which is a positive attitude and employee incivility which is a negative attitude.

The analysis of data showed that ethnic-based discrimination makes employee involvement decline, while the presence of ethnic-based discrimination leads to higher rate of incivility in the Civil Service. Therefore, it is believed that to enhance public servants positive attitudes to work, ethnic-based discrimination should be eradicated in the Civil Service.

5.2 Recommendations
Relying on the analysis carried out and comparison with contemporary studies, the following recommendations are postulated for the betterment of the civil service in the country:
i.   Recruitment and selection into the Civil Service be based on competency and capability, not on ethnic background.
ii.   Also, promotion in the civil service should be based on individual's contribution and level of productivity not ethnic jingoism so as to encourage positive attitudes from workers.
iii. Special committees should be set up to handle cases of ethnic-based discrimination quickly and offenders punished to serve as a deterrent to others who may want to engage in such negative practices.
iv.   Lastly, since positive attitudes promote organisational wellbeing, attitudes such as involvement should be applauded and special rewards given to encourage others to emulate same despite the presence of discrimination.

5.3 Limitations
The major limitation of this study is that the researcher collected data from Rivers State Civil Service alone, notwithstanding the fact that Nigeria is made up of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja). However, Rivers State has one of the largest Civil Service in the country, therefore it was considered a fair representation of Nigeria's Civil Service. Secondly, the study only focused on a single aspect of workplace discrimination (ethnic-based), ignoring the effects of other forms of discrimination (sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, age-based discrimination, religious-based discrimination) on the civil servants work attitudes.
Consequently, it is advised that future studies accommodate more states in their sample and incorporate other aspects of discrimination mentioned above. Again, future studies can examine the intervening effects of variables such as pay structure, reward system, organisational support on the association between workplace discrimination and employee job attitudes.

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