

## Labour Market Flexibility and the Rise of Non-Standard Work in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper examined labour market flexibility and rise of non-standard work within the Nigerian context. The objective is to examine the flexibility of the labour market and its contributions to the rise in non-standard jobs/employment in the Nigerian labour market. This paper adopted a descriptive approach which described, compared, and measured the data. Data were generated through integrative desk review of the official reports of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and empirical report from literature. Descriptive analyses were carried-out on the data and the outcome formed the basis for interpretation. The results of data analysis revealed a constant rise in non-standard work from 16.3% in 2010 to 22.80 in 2021. On the other hand, there has been a constant decline of standard jobs from 78.6% in 2010 to 43.9% in 2021. Key sectors (oil, banking, and telecommunication) also experienced rise in non-standard work. The paper concludes that labour market flexibility, which was aided by deregulation of national labour markets, provided a fertile ground for the rise of non-standard work in Nigeria. The paper recommends that non-standard workers' right to a free choice of employment and respectable working circumstances should be recognized in national labour market and employment policies.

**Keywords:** *Deregulation, Global supply chain, Labour market flexibility, Non-standard work, Nigeria*

### Introduction

Organizations in different economics of the world today are constantly confronted with increasing threat to survival occasioned by high rate of market competition. High rate of market competition arises from the increased interconnectivity and interdependency of the world economies via international trade, investment, and finance. Thus, the interconnectivity and interdependency of the world economies which is enabled by globalization has made it impossible for nations and organizations to operate in isolation. Part of the development orchestrated by economic globalization is flexibility in labour market which many organizations leverage on to survive the tide of competition through reduction in labour cost. Flexibility implies a shift from the traditional fixed or rigid employment arrangements to a new employment arrangement that recognize the growing market competition and the need to adopt varied employment arrangements that suite or address the situational challenges of global organizations. This allows organizations to adjust in their hiring patterns, reward systems, hour of work and other conditions of work as occasions demand. These employment arrangements suggest that employees are operating under different employment statuses such as casual/temporary workers, part-time workers, on-call workers, contract workers, outsourced or off-shored workers, home-based

workers, and fixed term workers (Quinlan, 2015).

The nature of the current global supply chain with its mode of production, trade and investment has also made it near impossible for organizations to operate within traditional or rigid labour market. With the fragmented nature of production and its attendant narrow range of tasks that are spread across multiple firms across national borders (Lee, 2016) Also comes the variations in employment arrangements. Since most firms within the global supply chain produce intermediate products, they tend to adopt flexible work patterns and arrangements that tend to reduce labour cost and encourage competitiveness. This development as currently observed is not limited to the OECD countries but is fast becoming a feature of labour markets of the developing economies such as Nigeria and other African countries. Currently, Nigerian labour market is undergoing structural changes in employment patterns with an increase in declining rate of full employment, increasing rate of casual/temporary and part-time jobs, increasing rate of contract/outsourced jobs and increasing rate of labour shedding (Ikeije, 2020a). As it is, managerial choices in employment appear to favour non-standard jobs to address personnel cost and adjust easily to fluctuations in the product market as part of organizational strategy to survive competition.

In addition, the quest for direct foreign investment (FDI) by government of developing countries and Nigeria has led to relaxed labour policies/regulations which are less and less protective, creating room for achievement of lower production cost (Ikeije, 2020b). Multinational corporations who are the main agents of economic globalization provide this foreign direct investment in the form of subsidiaries in the peripheral countries to produce intermediate products by taking advantage of these un-protective and lax labour policies. This condition is exacerbated by the interest of the government in currying relationship with the multinational corporations to avoid withdrawal of their investment and also to continue to enjoy benefits in form of royalties and taxes that come from these firms. To a large extent, private organizations - both in the formal and informal sectors, including the growing service sector – are fast incorporating flexible labour arrangements into their employment policies, especially as dictated by the changing global labour market operations.

As the labour market across the globe is becoming more and more flexible, there is equally an observed rise in non-standard work in both industrialized and developing economies. For example, Nigeria as a developing economy is experiencing changes in the world of work resulting from globalization and global supply chain. In this case, employment arrangements are shifting from standard employment to non-standard employment. This shift is not without consequences as non-standard work has employment deficits in the areas of job security, earnings, hours, occupational safety and health, social security, training and employees' representation (International Labour Organization, 2016). Specifically, the problem as observed in the Nigerian labour market today is a rising cases of job loss in various sectors of the economy. In 2020, 20% of Nigeria's full-time workers lost their jobs (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Available data also showed that the staffing strength in Nigeria's banking industry reduced by 2% to 93,090 in 2021 from 95,026 in 2020 (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The ongoing practice is that most of the full-time workers who lost their jobs are being re-absorbed as non-standard workers by their employers. Accordingly, the National President of Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions (ASSBIFI) disclosed that over 75% of workers in the banking sector in Nigeria are operating

under non-standard employment arrangement (Olasanoye, 2022). This point was further buttressed by Lala (2020) who noted that employers in Nigeria are increasingly filling positions in their organizations, which ought to be standard, with non-standard workers.

However, the situation was not the same until the adoption of economic reforms that resulted to the deregulation of the economy in line with the recommendation of International Monetary Fund (IMF). The passing into law of the Public Enterprises (Privatization and Commercialization) Act No. 28 of May 1999 in Nigeria (Omoleke and Adeopo, 2005) also brought reform in the labour market. This reform which was largely orchestrated by globalization put pressure on Nigerian labour market to conform to the global labour market practices marked by flexibility. Thus, it appears that the flexibility of the global labour market is creating a fertile ground for the rise in non-standard jobs/employment as being observed in the developing countries and Nigeria in particular. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to examine the flexibility of the labour market and its contributions to the rise in non-standard jobs/employment in the Nigerian labour market as it is experienced today.

## Conceptual Clarification

### *Labour Market Flexibility*

Generally, labour market has been literally described as the market where labour services are bought and sold. It is an exchange relationship that involves the dynamics of price mechanism through the forces of demand and supply. Labour market has also been described as an abstract concept since there is no location, like the product market, where potential suppliers and buyers of service meet for the exchange transaction (Fajana, 2000). In its broad sense, labour market involves all the institutional arrangements and policies that exert influence on the processes of engaging labour services and the outcomes of such processes. However, the concept of labour market flexibility translates to more employment and improved ability to react to the shifting economic landscape (Serban, 2012). The flexibility as used means that workers are at liberty to supply their labour services depending on the prevailing wage conditions or opportunities (Muhamad, 2006). However, four distinct types of labour market flexibility have been identified to include internal numerical flexibility, external

numerical flexibility, functional flexibility and supply side flexibility.

Internal numerical flexibility is the ability of the employer to adjust the number and distribution of hour of work without changing the workforce. Working time flexibility is a common name for it. External numerical flexibility is the capacity of the employers to change the workforce to suit the demands of the production process at the time (Paas & Eamets, 2006). This ability to adjust in response to production demand often necessitates different employment arrangements such as temporary, casual, and part-time employment, adjustments in wages and even increasing or decreasing the number of workers by way of additional employment or downsizing. On the other hand, functional flexibility mostly relates to the capacity of businesses to set up and alter internal production and labour utilization operations for the benefit of worker productivity, for example, through the fluidity of working hours, job requirements, skill requirements, or technical development (Rodgers, 2007). Supply flexibility pertains to the workers who may want flexible working time or arrangement that will provide them leeway to attend to personal matters. Employees may ask for flexible working hours to balance work and family obligations or the transfer of rights and benefits to allow switching between jobs (Rodgers, 2007).

Although labour market flexibility includes the fluidity in supply of labour, but emphasis or attention is often given to the demand for labour. As the reality of Nigerian labour market reveals, employers are always quick to adjust their labour demand, hours of work and wages whenever they are faced with either favourable or unfavourable market conditions that require adjustment in production demands. This cannot be said to be the same for supply of labour. As a result of globalization, most industrialized and emerging nations appear to see labour market flexibility as a major approach to increased employee flexibility in terms of hiring and firing, employment agreements, staff turnover, wage determination, minimum monetary compensation, hours of work, and entitlements in the labor market (Muhamad, 2006). Thus, flexible labour market is characterized by the employer's freedom to hire and fire employees, occupational and geographical mobility of labour, and non-interventionist posture of the regulatory authority (Pettinger, 2020). These conditions often give rise to different employment arrangements or

employment contracts, different payment arrangements and non-unionized workforce.

### ***Current Pattern of Labour Market Flexibility in Nigeria***

The Nigerian labour market presents a unique feature, especially one characterized by high rate of unemployment. As such the observed pattern of labour market flexibility in Nigeria is external numerical flexibility, which allows employers to change the workforce to suit the demands of the production process at the time (Paas & Eamets, 2006). This situation is necessitated by lax labour policies which de-emphasize strict institutional employment regulations to encourage or attract foreign direct investors. This gives employers the freedom to determine the employment arrangements that best suit their operations, even when such arrangements may not be beneficial to both parties (employer and employee) or maybe anti-labour. Thus, what is commonly observed are situations where employers adjust their employment arrangements in response to operational demands by shifting from full-time employment arrangement to temporary, casual, and part-time employment, wage adjustments and adjustments in the number of workers. The explanation is simple – in a market where supply of labour far exceeds demand for labour together with lax labour policies, such adjustments in employments becomes inevitable and easy.

The pattern of labour market flexibility could be further explained by the deregulation of the Nigerian economy as recommended by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Following the recommendations of these Bretton-Wood institutions, Nigeria pursued the structural adjustment programme and the twin programmes of privatization and commercialization. The privatization of formally public enterprises led to withdrawal of strict institutional employment regulation that emphasized full-time or permanent employment and provides the new owners adequate leeway to adjust to employment arrangement that would ensure cost control and enhance profit-making. Thus, the absence of government regulations of the privatized enterprises and their managerial orientation towards profit-making dislocated the traditional employment relations practices and introduced a new employment regime (Ikeije, Johnpedro & Nwakanma, 2021). This emerging scenario has resulted to structural changes in employment arrangements within the Nigerian labour market in terms of

declining rate of full-employment, increasing rate of casual/temporary and part-time employment, increasing rate of outsourcing and off-shoring as well as labour shedding (Ikeije, 2020a).

In addition, the Nigerian labour market is quite volatile due to harshness of business environment, which makes employers to adopt flexible approach in employment issues. This is reflective of Nigeria's ranking on ease of doing business in the world. The current rating according to World Bank showed that Nigeria ranked 131 out of 190 economies in the world on ease of doing business in 2022 (Onyedinefu, 2022). In the past Nigeria had also maintained all time low in this rating. For example Nigeria ranked 146 in 2018, 169 in 2016 and 170 in 2014. The implication of this is that surviving the business environment of Nigeria requires labour market flexibility which always manifest in the adoption of non-standard employment arrangements as cost-cutting strategy.

### ***Non-Standard Work***

Currently, there is no generally accepted definition of non-standard work in literature. Rather than definition, non-standard work is described through the lens of what constitute 'standard work'. Standard work or employment as it is sometimes called, is work that is full time, indefinite, as well as part of a subordinate and bilateral employment relationship; and in many occasions are carried out in a defined workplace outside the home (International Labour Organization, 2016). Therefore, work that do not conform to the characteristics of a "standard work or employment" fall under the category of non-standard work. These works include temporary employment, part-time work, temporary agency work, dependent self-employment and undeclared work/informal sector work (ILO, 2015). Temporary work is fixed term contract work, seasonal work, casual work including daily work. Part-time work involves few hours that is less than the normal hours require for a full-time job. In Nigeria, work that takes less than 40hours in a week is regarded as part-time work. This also includes additional part-time work that results to multiple job holding, and on-call work. Temporary agency work is contractual arrangements involving more than two parties. First, employment agency engages a worker by deploying the worker to another user firm to work. In this case, the user firm pays the agency the commercial contract fees, who in turn pays the worker. This is very common in the formal sector in developing

countries and Nigeria in particular. Undeclared work also known as disguised work entails employing employees through a third party or involving them in a civil, commercial, or cooperative arrangement rather than a hiring process while also controlling and supervising their work in a way that is inconsistent with their autonomous state (ILO, 2016). This kind of arrangement is predominant in the informal sector work in Nigeria, where third parties are often used in the recruitment of house-helps, domestic workers, cleaners etc.

Furthermore, there is an observed overlap between non-standard work and informal sector of the economy. Both jobs and employment practices in the informal sector do not conform to the established standard of the full-time job (Ikeije, Akomolafe & Onuba, 2016). Employment by unregistered businesses or individuals in households is considered informal employment. It also includes occupations where the worker's place of employment is located outside the employer's business or jobs where labour standards are not applied, enforced, or not followed for any other reason (Asao, 2011). The features of most of the work in the informal sector include low wage, temporary, part-time and self-employment that do not guarantee full employment (Ikeije, Nwakanma & Johnpedro, 2022). Again, complex interactions occur between and among the various non-standard work dimensions. For instance, temporary and part-time employment frequently overlap significantly, and employees in particular fields, such as home care and construction, may alternate between employment and self-employment frequently. This occurs not minding whether it is in the formal or informal sector.

### ***Institutional Influence on labour market flexibility***

Within every labour market, there are institutional arrangements that influence operations, events and outcomes in the market. In Nigeria, the key institutional arrangements include the state functioning through its regulatory agencies, the employers or their associations and the employees or their association. As such, labour market flexibility could arise from the activities of the employers as is the case with internal and external numerical flexibility; it could equally be from the part of the employees as is seen in labour supply flexibility. In addition, the state's labour market regulatory framework and policies often set the stage for adjustments by the employers in areas such as distribution of

working hours, wages, production, and employment. The same is true for the employees who may likely adjust labour supply to balance work and his private life. Therefore, government laws, which establish the legal framework to safeguard both employees and employers or at least define the arrangements which should be advantageous to both parties, exert a significant influence in the range of elements that might affect the flexibility of the labour market (Paas & Eamets, 2006).

In this era of globalization, government of developing countries, including Nigeria, is reconsidering and reviewing its labour market policies and regulatory frameworks in order to accommodate the requirement of global economic system characterized by economic liberalization and deregulation (Ikeije, 2020b). This development has also resulted to a labour market that has been deregulated to increase revenues or cut expenses, thereby generating more profit for investors (Fang, Gozgor & Nolt, 2022). Thus, government regulations in the areas of hiring and minimum wage, hours of work, decentralized (enterprise level) bargaining are creating labour market flexibility. Within the Nigerian labour market context, part of the government deregulation effort that is contributing to labour market flexibility is the twin programme of privatization and commercialization. Since companies can import production inputs rather than generating them, global value chains and trade liberalization increase their bargaining power resulting in a more flexible labor market (Boulhol, 2009).

On their part, employers operating within the global economic arrangement prefer a flexible labour market that allows adjustment in employment arrangements, wages and hours of work to a rigid labour market that maintains standardized employment arrangement, hours of work and wage administration. The interest in managing cost and achieving higher profit have been the major reasons behinds organizations' preference for flexible labour market. Thus, employers are pushing for a more deregulated labour market. By this, traditionally established institutional regulation of employment relations are being dismantled to give room to more liberal and flexible employment arrangements (Ikeije, 2020b). It is believed that the advantage derivable from this flexible employment arrangement will help in reducing unemployment rate through more jobs creation and allows for an easier integration of these people, who are often in

nonstandard employment situations involuntarily (Kahn, 2010).

### ***Theoretical Explanation***

This paper builds on convergence theory by Kerr (1983) which holds that 'convergence' means 'the tendency of societies to grow more alike, to develop similarities in structures, processes and performances. Drawing from this proposition, convergence which is synonymous with globalization plays major role in labour market flexibility of developing countries such as Nigeria. Convergence theory holds the view that changes at the international economy occasioned by globalization have important consequences for national patterns of employment relations (Bray & Murray, 2000) and by extension the labour market operations. As such, Turner and Windmuller (1998) stated that the operations of the labour market is among the areas in industrial relations that is capable of converging. This suggests that convergence thesis maintains that globalization which is accountable for adjustments in different national economies is exerting pressures on those economies to adopt common or similar patterns of labour market operations defined by growing flexibility. The activities of global supply chain have given rise to global labour market which is causing a shift from rigid labour market characterized by permanent full-time employment to flexible labour market characterized by non-standard employment. The claim is that labor market rigidities prevent organizations from being as productive as they ought to be because they make it difficult for them to adapt to market volatility, changing economic conditions, technological advancements, and rising global rivalry (Mathekga, 2009).

In practical terms, national governments including Nigeria are amending labour market policies to accommodate the desires of foreign investors to encourage foreign investment (Ikeije, 2020b). Economic reforms such as deregulation, privatization, and commercialization programmes (which are recommended by International Monetary Fund and World Bank) have implications for lax employment regulations, which gave room for a common pattern of global labour market policies. Today, flexible labour market practices such as outsourcing, offshoring, contract employment, part-time jobs, casual work and temporary jobs have risen over the years (Ikeije, 2020b). Therefore, driven by the desire to cut cost and maximize profit, most foreign investors prefer deregulated labour market that allows flexibility in employment

and wages. Organizations' desire to maximize the efficacy of human capital serves as further evidence of the need for increased labor market flexibility. Because of this, there is desire in creating measures to make some labor markets more flexible and, by doing so, boost their attractiveness to foreign investors (McGuire, Garavan, O'Donnell, & Dineen, 2002).

### Methodology

In examining the issue of labour market flexibility and the rise in non-standard work in Nigeria, this paper adopted a descriptive approach which described, compared, and measured the data. The data were generated through integrative desk review which involved a systematic search of relevant official records or reports and secondary data from literature. The official reports were generated from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and empirical report from literature. Descriptive analyses were carried-out on the data and the outcome formed the basis of interpretation. The data which captured

standard and non-standard work for a particular period of time were presented in tables for easy analysis using frequencies and percentages. This was also supplemented with data reflecting the situation of standard and non-standard work in key sectors of the economy which included: Oil sector, Banking sector and Telecommunication sector. Results from the analyses of these data provided the basis for the explanation of the phenomenon under examination.

### Empirical Analysis of Rise in Non-Standard Work in Nigeria

Available data show that there has been a rise in non-standard jobs in Nigeria over the last decade. This is due to the global supply chain that has led to deregulation of the labour and the introduction of flexibility in employment arrangements to survive the tide of global competition. To this end, organizations in Nigeria are showing increasing preference for non-standard jobs to standard jobs. Table I below shows the trends of standard and non-standard jobs from 2010 to 2021.

**Table I: Trends of Standard and Non-standard Jobs in Nigeria (2010 – 2021)**

Year	Standard Jobs (%)	Non-standard Jobs (%)
2010	78.6	16.3
2011	76.1	17.9
2012	76.7	16.8
2013	79.9	14.8
2014	75.7	17.9
2015	70.8	18.7
2016	64.7	21.0
2017	59.1	20.5
2018	56.7	20.14
2019	NA	NA
2020	43.9	22.84
2021	43.9	22.80

*Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2017, 2018, 2019 & 2021)*

Table I shows that from 2010 to 2021 standard jobs (which represents full employment) has been on the decrease, while non- standard jobs (which represents under-employment) has been on the increase. The standard jobs decreased from 78.6% in 2010 to 43.9% in 2021. However, within the same period non-

standard jobs rose from 16.3% in 2010 to 22.80% in 2021. Here standard jobs fall under the category of full employment which National Bureau of Statistics (2018) described as a situation where the worker works for at least 40hours in a week. Non-standard jobs fall under the category of under-employment

which National Bureau of Statistics (2018) also described as a situation which occurs when one works less than full-time hours, which is 40 hours, but work at least 20 hours on average a week and /or when one works full time but is engaged in an activity that underutilizes one's skills, time, and educational qualifications. This evidence is a clear indication that there is a continuous shift from standard jobs to non-standard jobs. This

is a direct response to the growing labour market flexibility which globalization favours. Employers are introducing flexible employment arrangements to increase the capacity of their organizations to adapt easily to global market requirements. The incidence of standard and non-standard jobs in key sectors of the Nigerian economy is presented below.

**Table II: Incidence of Standard and Non-standard Jobs in Oil and Gas Sector in Nigeria**

Company	Standard Jobs		Non-standard jobs		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Agip Oil	246	12.8	1,680	87.2	1,926
Chevron	202	25.8	582	74.2	784
Shell	695	7.8	8,190	92.2	8,885
Connoil	387	15.3	2,150	84.7	2,537
Mobil	35	6.2	529	93.8	564
NNPC	9,000	75.0	3,000	25.0	12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,565</b>		<b>16,131</b>		<b>26,696</b>

*Source: Fapohunda (2012)*

Table II shows that incidence of non-standard jobs was higher in the oil sector when compared with standard jobs in 2012. All the major oil companies, apart from NNPC that is owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria, employed more non-standard workers than standard or full-time workers. This situation is predominant in the oil and gas sector of the

Nigerian economy, where oil companies prefer to use casual workers, contract workers and temporary workers to carry-out their operations. Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) employed more full-time workers (75%) because its operations in relation to employment still follows the standardized or traditional employment policy.

**Table III: Incidence of Standard and Non-standard Jobs in the Banking Sector in Nigeria**

Company	Standard Jobs		Non-standard jobs		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
UBA	595	15.8	3,178	84.2	3,773
GTB	358	14.1	2,180	85.9	2,538
ZENITH	325	16.2	1,680	83.8	2,005
SKYE	264	16.2	1,376	84.0	1,640
FIRST BANK	1,830	30.0	4,270	70.0	6,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,372</b>		<b>12,684</b>		<b>16,056</b>

*Source: Fapohunda (2012)*

Table III shows the incidence of standard and non-standard jobs in the major commercial banks in Nigeria. As evidence has shown, all the major commercial banks prefer non-standard employment (70% and above) to standard employment. These data reflect the situation in the banking sector of the Nigerian economy as many commercial banks outsource

most of their functions to external service providers who use casual and temporary workers to carry-out the activities. Such functions as security, tellers, cleaners, marketers, customer services among others are contracted out in the banking industry. This is a clear indication of rise in non-standard jobs in that sector.

**Table IV: Incidence of Standard and Non-standard Jobs in the Telecommunication Sector in Nigeria**

Company	Standard Jobs		Non-standard jobs		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
MTN	151	2.6	5,570	97.4	5,721
Airtel Nigeria	105	2.1	4,800	97.9	4,905
GLO	92	3.4	2,650	96.6	2,742
Etisalat	67	4.6	1,376	95.4	1,443
Starcomms	46	3.9	1,130	96.1	1,176
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>		<b>15,526</b>		<b>15,987</b>

*Source: Fapohunda (2012)*

Table IV shows that there is a high rate of adoption of non-standard jobs in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria. As the table shows, greater percentage of the workers in the telecommunication sector work under non-standard employment arrangement such as casuals, contractors, temporary, part-time, and on-call workers. In fact, telecommunication companies in Nigeria outsourced and offshored most of their operations to third party service providers. The predominant nature of this kind of arrangement is likely because of the technical nature of their operations which requires sourcing for workers with the technical know-how from various sources within and outside the country.

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis so far has shown that there has been constant rise in non-standard jobs in the Nigerian labour market. Since Nigeria embraced labour market liberalization as its labour market legislation option from the early 1990s till date, the country has witnessed increased activities of global supply chain. Labour market deregulation created the fertile ground for flexibility in employment, wages, hours of work, and productivity. With the evolution of global supply chain into a complex network of firms with multiple tiers of suppliers (Lee, 2016), the preference for labour market flexibility increased aimed at surviving global competition. Thus, International Labour Organization (2015) stated that non-standard forms of work are increasing in many developing countries where global supply chains contribute significantly in export growth and employment. This also suggests that the quest to survive competition through reduction of cost has led to a shift from standard full-time employment to non-standard employment. As the empirical data shows, there has been a sustained rise non-standard jobs in Nigeria from 16.3% in 2010 to 22.8% in 2021.

For example, the Nigerian oil and gas industry maintained standard employment arrangement in the 1990s. During this period, approximately 70% of the workforce were made-up of standard workers, while 30% were made-up of contract workers, who were all directly employed by the oil companies. For instance, Mobil Producing Oil had more than four hundred junior standard workers in the 1980s and by 1991, this figure reduced

significantly to eighty junior standard workers. By 2002, there was no direct standard worker of Mobil Oil (Okafor, 2012; Adewumi & Adenugba, 2010). However, we have now witnessed a great change as there is an increase in the number of non-standard workers in the oil and gas industry.

A report by Danesi (2012) revealed that as at 2010, ExxonMobil hired 3,835 non-standard workers against 2,118 standard workers. Shell Petroleum employed 17,000 non-standard workers against 3,625 standard workers. Likewise, Chevron employed 2,400 non-standard workers against 2,000 standard workers. However, an empirical study by Iteboje (2018) found that in 2015, Shell Nigeria had approximately 6,000 standard workers and 35,000 non-standard workers. While ExxonMobil Nigeria had 4,000 standard workers against 8,000 non-standard workers, while Chevron had 3,100 standard workers against 3,500 non-standard workers. This empirical evidence are indications of rise of non-standard work in the Nigerian labour market.

This scenario is not different from what obtains in the labour markets of other countries. For instance, in China, dispatched non-standard workers doubled in number to 60 million between 2008 and 2012. In India, non-standard workers increased from 13% to 20% between 1994 and 2006 in manufacturing industry (Rossman, 2013). Also, in Mexico, approximately 60% of workers in electronics industry were non-standard workers in 2009, and it was about 90% in some companies. In the same manner, non-standard workers in Thailand accounted for more than half of the approximately 500,000 workers in the

electronics industry (Holdcroft, 2012). It therefore shows that the current global competition sees non-standard work as part of the strategies to maximize the potential of national labour markets for competitiveness and growth.

## Conclusion

This paper examined labour market flexibility and the rise in non-standard work within the context of Nigerian labour market. Based on available information in relevant literature, the paper discussed how globalization has influenced deregulation of national labour markets and provided a fertile ground for the growth of flexible labour market. Part of this development is the increased activities of global supply chain which favours non-standard work. Deregulated labour market with its attendant flexibility obviously holds a lot of benefits for the employer especially as it has to do with the ability to respond to changing patterns of trade, investment, and production by adjusting to different employment arrangements. It also holds certain benefits to the workers as workers who perform non-standard work may have greater time flexibility and, in some cases, even prefer it to normal, full-time employment.

However, in some cases, workers who are involved in non-standard work are exposed to certain degree of precariousness which are inherent in such jobs in Nigerian labour market due to lack of regulation to protect them, especially those in the informal sector. In addition, it frequently results in a variety of

socially degrading outcomes, such as wage discrimination, job instability, poor worker health, a lack of benefits, insufficient skill development, limited negotiating power, and low unionization (Lee, 2016). Against the background of the foregoing, the paper concludes that labour market flexibility which was aided by deregulation of national labour markets provided a fertile ground for the rise of non-standard work in Nigeria.

## Recommendations and Policy Implications

Given that the current global economic arrangement has made labour market flexibility as the major option to drive the activities of global supply chain, it is recommended that non-standard workers' right to a free choice of employment and respectable working circumstances should be recognized in national labour market and employment policy. The regulators of labour market in Nigeria should formulate policies aimed at protecting the rights of non-standard workers from undue exploitation by their employers. Part of this is the need for policy encouraging non-standard workers to organize and protect their members against unfair labour practices that are often melted-out on this category of workers.

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