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An Assessment of EFCC Anti-Corruption Agency in Nigeria, 2015-2025

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Abstract
The purpose of this research work on corruption control in Nigeria is to critically analyze the activities of the anti-graft agency (EFCC) in the fight and control against corruption in Nigeria between 2015-2018. In order to do this, the qualitative descriptive method was used, the secondary source generated the data. To analyse the secondary data collected to undertake this study, content analysis was adopted. The study also embraced a structural-functionalism theory which Talcott Parson postulated in the 1930s. It was found that the EFCC is an instrument of each successive regime to persecute their perceived rivals. Hence, the work suggested the following; (i) government must ensure that there is no avenue to abuse offices. ii) Over centralisation of power in Nigeria system of governance should not occur. (ili) Public and private organisation officers should be paid (salaries and allowances) as at when due. (iv) This should be done in frantic endeavor to alter the value orientation of both the many public and private officers whose value placement is on self-achievement rather than patriotism.

Keywords: *Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Corruption, anti-graft agency, embezzlement, misappropriation, prosecution, investigation*.

Introduction

Nigeria is a nation having approximately 200 million people. The nation is abundantly blessed with a lot of valuable material resources as well as human resources. It is considered that a nation endowed with such immense natural resources is one of the top most economies in the world. But it is quite unfortunate that the country has been rated as one of the poverty stricken countries with 70 percent or so of the Nigeria population wallowing in abject poverty below the poverty line and meaningful development has remained elusive to us since all sectors of the economy have remained underdeveloped and inflations have been on the increasing trend. Signs of weakness have still been evident in government institutions.

Efforts have been made by the concerned people in the society to find the source of corruption in Nigeria. Osoba (1996) and Aluko (2009) view corruption as an anti-social behaviour that benefits people improperly against the law and morals and destroy the ability to transform living conditions of people. Since its inception, corruption has been the most pressing issue that the Nigerian government has been grappling with. It should be stressed that corruption is a global issue that has presented a grave challenge to every known nation in the world. It is only that in some countries, the frequency, magnitude and degree of the menace as it persists varies. Corruption tends to have very negative impacts. Corruptions destroy the good governance, corruption essentially distort the public policy, cause misallocation of resources, damage the organised private sector, and damage the poor (Nwaobi, 2006, p. 146). Wagiri (2011) made the argument that corruption is the greatest killer disease in Africa. With corruption, basic amenities like Medical care, water, school, road, and other infrastructure are inaccessible. It has brought on such a disgraceful and sad picture of our land amongst other countries, more particularly in the military times.

Colonialism has been found to be the root of corruption. Nwagwu (2012, p.43) argued that it is among the colonial legacies that left to the post-independent Nigeria. This cankerworm has taken a pervasive form in as much as it has infiltrated the different spheres of our socio-economic and political lives, has eaten through our moral fabric and has threatened to destabilize our country. Corruption levels have been high in Nigeria; its peak was reached in 2004 when a global non-governmental organisation investigated the level of corruption in Nigeria. In its perception index, Transparency International (TI) scored Nigeria second most corrupt country in the world.

On October 1st, 1960, Nigeria received its independence. A nation that is abundantly blessed with massive geographical and various natural resources including crude oil, gas (natural) coal. Nigeria has potential marketability to achieve a rapid economic growth. Despite all these perceived resources and its advantaging factor, Nigeria is a poor and underdeveloped nation. Nigeria has been very corrupt since gaining independence. It is possible that we even inherited here the problem of our colonizers. Many institutions in the state have been rendered dysfunctional due to massive corruption practices. Corruption has become so common in Nigeria that it has made it a sort of a criminal business to serve the people. Graft has driven political violence, deprived millions of Nigerians access to even the most rudimentary health and education services, and entrenched police abuse and other prevalent trends of human rights abuse (The Record of Nigeria Economic and Financial Crimes Commissionm, 2011).

Projects are dropped and no one taken to book, public goods and resources diverted to individual purposes. Corruption threatens good governance and the democracy that we currently observe. The coupists of January 15th, 1966 military putsch named corruption as one of the most outstanding reasons of the first military coup in Nigeria. Large-scale corruption and resource brigandage were also cited as causes behind the military usurpation by the Buhari regime. On the 31st December 1983, Tundeldiagbon was born. This despite the fact that the military elite in their entirety cannot be referred to as saints on the one side. With the rampant level of corruption in Nigeria, the former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo in his first speech on May 29th 1999 declared that the one biggest evil of our society today, corruption would be addressed at all costs. A society can never realize its potentials when corruption has become a full blown cancer as it has become in our country. The World Bank (1975) notes that corruption has flourished because of poor design of economic policies, low level of education or education standards, low level of civil society participation, poor management of the public sector and poor accountability of the public institutions. Corruption has been the order of the day in our publicly-owned institution and since Government business is no ones business then the country is still suffering (Nzemeke and Erhagbe, 2002, p.131). Corruption has been mentioned as the biggest cause why developmental prescription, aids and policies inflicted on Nigeria by international financial bodies.

Therefore, corruption is very much, to the community and the political entity what HIV/AIDS is to the human body. Corruption is manifestation of the Deficiency of Integrity Syndrome leading to a socio-virus (corruption). Corruption destroys law and order, the arrangement of the economy and consequently facilitates the easy infiltration of the country to be overrun by all types of deficiencies and crimes. According to Adesua (1987, pp.8-9), in Nigeria, corruption is a highly organized and well established social ill afflicting the country but which practically has the tacit consent of virtually all Nigerians in the society ladders. This can be described just the opposite of what is the case in the Nigerian country in regards to corruption. Certainly, corruption is rampant in the country. It penetrates every layer of the social and civil existence. It is not unique to the country, to any regime or government. Honesty has apparently taken flight and corruption has in the meantime gained ground in a very great degree and become very rampant.

Familoni (2005, p.51) says that corruption in Nigeria is practically inevitable since individuals need to earn money. Transparency International (TI) and Goettingen University carried out a corruption survey in 1996 where Nigeria was ranked as the most corrupt country of the fifty-four (54) listed countries in the survey followed by Pakistan as the second most corrupt country. Even in the 1998 transparency international Corruption Perception Index (CPI), the picture of Nigeria went down further with a ranking of ninety (90) of the ninety one (91) countries that were merged together - Bangladesh was ranked first. In 2003, the country stood or rather remained in the same position. In the year 2006, Nigeria was placed one hundred and forty two (142) in the top one hundred and sixty-three (163) countries that were pooled together in the transparency international perception index, with Haiti being the most corrupt country in the world.

Statement of the Problem

They elect political leaders to help populate the productive front of the economy, form jobs and give society a fair and egalitarian place, where peace, the rule of law, and justice, must attempt to operate. Nigerians have realized the need to set up Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to ensure that these expected dividends are delivered by the office holders in the society rather than enrich themselves at the expense of the people. This is so because the corruption rate is very high and is destroying the economy of this nation. It is on this backdrop that this study is bound to explore corruption control in Nigeria.

And corruption is not unthinkable in all human activities, nor in just those of the human family, of government as of non-governmental organizations, but that of the public organization is delicate, due to its functions in government and the whole society. It has radically polluted the overall performance of public servants in their different offices. It has rendered their prestige and dignity subordinate and in the broad spectrum has given the country a foul reputation, not only to her fellow countrymen but throughout the world in her intercourse with other nations. The one that can be best described as the life wire of the nation has undergone various reform over the years in its search to make a better Nigeria, its effects have been both gross inefficiency and ineffectiveness and also bribery and corruption. This has taken the form of both the state and the non-state sector of the economy. The above problems led to this research work.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

(i) Why is it that there is corruption in Nigeria?
(ii) What has the EFCC accomplished in the war and management of corruption in Nigeria?
(iii) What are the issues that the EFCC are struggling with in their fight against

corruptions in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

This work has the following objectives:

(i) investigate the issues of corruption in Nigeria.
(ii) analyse how EFFC is doing in its fight against corruption in Nigeria.
(iii) define the obstacles to success of EFCC in the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Literature Review

What is Corruption?

Scholars have offered a number of explanations and definitions of corruption basing on political science, psychology, and even religious circle just to mention a few. Consequently, an attempt at defining corruption is surely seen as a reiteration of a previously-existing conception of the phenomenon. Regardless of the angle through which one may look at the concept, it largely implies the abuse of office or office in personal interests or benefits. To a lay person, corruption means working against a given acceptable pattern of behaviour due to gaining personal interests in any social relations.

This is the stage where one has to study the opinions of other prominent scholars on the concept. Brairamain (1951) referred to corruption as the reception or giving of certain favors to reward or induce the recipient to deviate or avoid in the honest and unbiased fulfilment of his duties. Therefore, the crime of corruption is not only limited to money but also includes aspects like sexual favour, grant of titles or appointment (including promotions) to offices, accession to clubs, societies or institutions. The gist of the offence takes into considerations the offering and acceptance of money in kind or cash to decline to commit an act to the advantage of the person giving it. In the eyes of Lipset and Lenz, corruption can be viewed as the effort to gain wealth or power in an illegitimate way to benefit a person at the expense of the people. Etymologically, corruption is firstly an original Latin verb rumpere literally meaning break.

Based on the above, corruption would be the violation of an already set code of behavior with the aim of personal benefit to the violator. In this respect, Osoba (1996) describes it as an anti-social behaviour that accords inappropriate benefits as against the law and morality and it also affects the ability of authorities to alleviate the living standards of the people. Wilkins (1970) views corruption as contrasting or incompatible with the norms that are espoused as normal in a group or social system. As Ikejiani-Clark (1995) quoted Sprott, he said that the deviance would mean order. We carry in our minds, at the very back, the idea of a social system whose normative rules and deviance is the breach of the rules of behavior expected within the culture. Rose-Acknerman (1978) views corruption as the actions of a government official that is contrary to the official responsibilities of a governmental position due to personal concerns.

Ikejiani-Clarki (2005) addresses the concept in the two perspectives, individual approach and systemic view. Individually, corruption is the access and acquisition of power and trust by unscrupulous individuals. Being unscrupulous individuals, they lose their sense of the conventions of official public behaviour. Systemic corruption on the other hand is observed as the state of affairs where the wrong has become normal and the acceptable standard of behaviour required to realise organizational objectives based on the concept of the duty to the people and levels of trust has become an exception and not the norm.

Nwosu (2004) defines corruption as the direct or indirect inducement by the provision of cash or kind on a person or public or a private organization, office holder to act or fail to act in which the provider (giver) would benefit. The term corruption has a very large and immeasurable meaning, it nevertheless does not tend to act in a vacuum and it is largely accompanied with bribery, nepotism, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds (Moddie 2004). The new collegiate dictionary by Webster defines corruption as:

a) Vice of Kudlerian depravity of moral principal.
b) Decay, decomposition.
c) induction to wring by way of bribery or other illegal or inappropriate methods.

Ribadu (2004) declares that under section 46 EFCC Act 2004 economic and financial crimes, means the criminal and illicit act not committed by violence involves an activity with the intention of earning money in an illegal and non-violent manner, be it individually or in a group or organized form and therefore constitutes a criminal offense as it is against the legislation that governs economic activities of government and administration at large and also includes any form of deceit narcotic, drug dealing, money laundering, bribery and embezzlement, looting and any form Agha (2002) states that corruption implies decay, to drain to rot, degenerate, waste away, and lose dignity and integrity. This in his view annihilates all virtues. To his opinion I shall add that it is a rejection of justice or common service to humanity, fairness and goodwill. Numerous researchers were involved in this social vice. As a matter of fact it is a daredevil that looks humanity in the face, it is also a world wide problem with destroying inclinations, particularly that of the public service. According to Funk and Wagnalls (1976, p. 144), corruption can be viewed as the state of being untrue and unscrupulous as well as bribery, moral decadence, physical dilapidity, rot and corrupting influence. Using this definition, when we compare what is happening in the society, we will say that Nigeria is corrupt or that the private and public sector is corrupt.

Akani (2001, p 31) opined that, corruption implies the compromise or corruption of a legitimate process in order to accrue an advantage, which in the majority of cases is selfish and personal. It is a deceitful and stinking mode of acquiring things which in ordinary times could not have been acquired. It can even permeate the psyche of man and once it is not stemmed out in the bud, it becomes part of his norms, and consecrated conventions as it is the case in Nigeria. It is an intentional and conscious infiltration of procedure to achieve a personal gain. He has continued to support this by saying, corruption is acquiring material enrichment or opportunity on one's own behalf and /or behalf of others by use of office or personal connection in a manner other than that publicly recognized or established through the rules and procedure of office (Akani, 2001, p.10).

Corruption drives the motor of capitalist mode of production (due to the economic and political advantages). By this I mean the greater the spread of capitalism, the greater the spread of corruption and the more sophisticated it becomes according to the degree of social and economic development. Corruption is essential to and promoted by all capitalist economies, as in a capitalist economy the engine is the impulse and motivation to make personal profit and accumulate capital.

According to Azelama, (2002, p 90) corruption can be described as any act or omission passed by an individual in an organization that contravenes the rules, regulations, norms and ethics of the organization and the aim is to serve the selfish interest of the individual at the expense of the organization. According to the UN Global Programme against corruption (GPAC), corruption is defined as power abuse with regards to personal interests. According to World Bank (2015) and Transparency International (2013), corruption is defined as the misuse of the power entrusted to the holder of the office or some third party who serves personal benefit. Imam (2005, p 20), considers corruption as any induced or uninduced action in a complex or private organization to distort its integrity, purpose, virtue and ethics. According to Adeyemi (1988, p 9) corruption is defined as offence. According to Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) (2001) corruption was defined as the violation or irregular change or debasement or subversion of a generally or an officially accepted standard or procedure or method of performing a duty or preserving social, political, administrative, legal and or religious order (p.3). Thus any person who participates in an activity that breaches or opposes or humiliates or goes against a generally established law or norm or practice or process or protocol is regarded corrupt to and the undermining or the action is seen as corruption. See how it has been happening, that projects are been awarded, and a lot of money is been released to the implementation of such projects in such a ministry like, agriculture, health, education, what the minister will do, is release part of the money to the contractor and take the rest when the amount released to the contractor runs out, that contractor will not do otherwise than to abandon the project because those who are in position who will question him are guilty of corruption.

This has been an issue in each minister that enters the power gate. Such activities can result only in decadence and corruption in the society. Society will keep on rotting, major project will not be completed. According to Abony (2007, p.268) corruption was defined as moral laxity or decadence, deficiency of common morality, increasing cultural and religious decadence. He has also contended that corruption is not merely an issue of morality, it is fundamentally a structural problem that impels and perpetuates itself by infiltrating the socioeconomic arrangement of any given society. Through this I will include the fact that corruption is practically in all sections of the society including the religious sector. It is slowly becoming a norm in all areas of human activity.

Corruption is of two dimensions and types.

Aluko (2009) defined the dimensions of corruption, though of course, not only those mentioned, as follows:

a. Political Corruption (grand);
b. bureaucratic corruption (petty);
c. Electoral Corruption;
d. Bribery;
e. Fraud;
f. Embezzlement;
g. Extortion;
h. Favouritism; and
i. Nepotism.

Political Corruption: Political corruption is the one that occurs in the very top political authority. It arises due to corruption among the politicians and political decision-makers who should make, draw and enforce the laws on behalf of the people. It also occurs when policy formulations and legislation is being made in such a way that it favours the politicians and legislators. Political corruption is no new phenomenon that runs through the Nigerian State: ever since the inception of modern public administration in the country, instances of abuse of resources by authorities in their own benefit have been witnessed. The emergence of the public administration and the finding of oil are two significant phenomena observed to have contributed to a catalogue of sordid, corrupt practices within the country. The government has also over the years had its wealth eroded with not much to reflect in the living standard of the common man.

Bureaucratic Corruption: A bureaucratic corruption is observed in the government administration or the execution side of politics. This form of corruption has been labeled as low-end corruption and street level corruption. It is the type of corruption the citizens experience in the day-to-day life, such as in hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police, tax offices, etc. Similar to the corruption of need, bureaucratic petty corruption is the situation when a person acquires business on the government side with the help of an unsuitable process (Dike, 2005).

Electoral Corruption: Electoral corruption refers to using money, election promises, coercion, intimation and interference with freedom of election. In Nigeria, elections are bought and people are killed or maimed in the name of election. The worst part is the losers emerge as winners during elections and votes are discovered in a place where no votes were cast (Dike, 2005).

Bribery: Bribery, just as lying, is not a value-neutral concept. It is negatively connoted and is considered by the majority to be largely, though by no means universally, incorrect. At least, corrupt individuals who bribe have some burden in justifying their actions.

Bribery is a white-collar offense whereby money, a favour or other items of value are offered, received or stolen by an individual or corporation in an attempt to influence his views, opinions or decisions. In one instance, when an electoral candidate gave money to secure votes, it would be termed as a bribe. Typically, bribery takes two parts to it: the one to receive a bribe and the one to give it. Corruption culture has pervaded all spheres of the Nigerian society, thus in certain countries such as Nigeria, it is so hard to remain in business without giving bribes. Bribes can be given to have an official do what he already gets paid to do. They might also be necessary to circumvent laws and regulations. Bribery is, hence, the giving or receiving in a corrupt relationship of payment, in money or kind. These are kickbacks, gratuities, pay-off, sweeteners, greasing palms (Bayart, Ellisa and Hibou, 1997).

Fraud: In Criminal law, a misstatement made purposely with the intention of harming another, in order to deprive that person or people of property or services to which they are not entitled is called fraud -usually, to obtain property or services unlawfully. Fraud may be achieved by the assistance of falsified objects. A fraud is in its broadest sense is a deception with personal gain. Fraud is associated with some form of deception, sham and misrepresentation, falsification, racketeering, smuggling and forgery (Bayart, Ellisa and Hibou, 1997).

Embezzlement: this is the action of stealing the resources of the public by those in a position of authority within a given public institution where they work. Economic accumulation in Nigeria in one of the most widespread ways of embezzling public funds, possibly, because there are no rigid systems of regularity. It is blatant embezzlement of public money. It is theft of property.

Extortion: Money and other resources raised by force, violence or threat of violence. It tends to be regarded as mining below the ground (Bayart, Ellisa and and Hibou, 1997). The culprits are the police and the customs officers in Nigeria. These corrupt officials normally demand payments in exchange of which they otherwise threaten to illegitimately use State force to cause harm to innocent victims (public transport diver).

Favouritism: It is an abuse of power involving a highly skewed allocation of the state resources. Nonetheless, this is regarded as a natural human tendency to be biased in favor of friends, family and anyone close or trusted.

Nepotism: It is a special kind of favouritism where office-holders choose their relatives and family members. This happens when one escapes the application of certain laws or regulations or receives unnecessary favor in distributing the limited resources (Chigbo, 2010).

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) - Nigeria (2015-2024) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International measures the state of corruption on a 0 to 100 scale, with 0 being highly corrupt, and 100 being very clean.

Year	CPI Score	Global Rank
2015	26	136
2016	28	136
2017	27	148
2018	27	144
2019	26	146
2020	25	149
2021	24	154
2022	24	150
2023	25	145
2024	26	140

Source: Author's Compilation from: https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023?utm_

Before the EFCC was formed, previous regimes have tried to reduce corruption in Nigeria. A bright spot was the introduction of War Against Indiscipline (WAI) in March of 1984 under the Buharildiagbon regime. The military regime of the two, beat its beak on the rock a number of times in the struggle against disobedience, corruption and wickedness in Nigeria as an eagle wanting to lose its former beak on top of a mountain. Corruption levels greatly decreased but after the government was sacked by General Babangida in August 1985 the corruption level in the country once again shot to the sky.

Indeed, fraud, economic mismanagement, accountability and transparency became one great concern in all quarters of the federation, as it significantly suppressed real development in the country. With this consideration, Akanbi (2004) as cited in Orokpo (2017) confirms that the past legacy of corruption and absence of accountability that had pervaded under military rule (primarily after Buhari-Idiagbon regime) was a kibosh or a inhibitor to socio-economic development of the country. Orngu (2006) as cited in (Orokpo, 2017) also explained it is quite clear that before the fourth republic, which began in 1999, was corruption that sewed and applied a garment of failed state on Nigeria.

However, as the administration of President Oluseegun Obasanjo attempted to burn the discreditable garment and attempted to pull the nation out of the water of a failed state, the EFCC was founded by his administration in 2002 by an Act of the National Assembly. That being the case, corruption continued to skyrocket in the country to such an extent that the Transparency International ranked Nigeria in 2004 Corruption Perception Index at the second place in the list of the most corrupt countries in the world (for accuracy purpose: 133 out of 133 countries surveyed) and the country is losing US$ 25.76 billion dollars annually (Nwoba & Monday, 2018; Njekwu, 2011). Eventually the government of Obasanjo in view of the above amended the Establishment Act in 2004.

Therefore, according to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004, the organization undertakes the following functions:

(i) The application and the proper execution of the stipulations of the Act.

(ii) Investigation of all the financial crimes such as advanced frauds, money laundering, counterfeiting, transfer of illegal charges, futures market fraud, scamming of negotiable instruments encashment, computer credit card fraud, contract scam, etc.

iii) The co-ordination and enforcement of all the laws and enforcement functions of economic and financial crimes conferred on any other person or authority.

iv) Adoption of the measures to designate, track, freeze, seize or confiscate the proceeds of the activities of the terrorist group, economical and financial crimes connected offenses or the estates the worth of which is equivalent to the proceeds.

v) The embrace of tactics to eliminate the occurrence of economic and financial crimes.

vi) The implementation of six actions which entails coordinated preventive and regulatory actions, establishment and sustenance of investigative and control methods on prevention of economic and financial offenses.

vii) The promotion of swift sharing of scientific and technical data and execution of collaborative activities oriented towards the elimination of economic and financial offenses.

vii) The screening and investigating of all reported economic and financial crimes cases with the aim of identifying individuals, corporate entities or organizations involved.

ix) Government, private individuals or organization determination of the amount of financial loss and such other losses.

X) Cooperation with governmental institutions both within and outside of Nigeria that conduct similar functions (wholesomely or partially) to those of the Commission.

xi) Addressing the issues related to the extradition, deportation and mutual legal or other assistance of Nigeria and any other country in the context of Economic and Financial Crimes.

xii) Appropriately analyse all reports concerning suspicious financial transactions and distribute them to all the relevant Governmental authorities.

xiii) Being in control of, overseeing, regulating, coordinating all duties, roles and operations pertaining to the investigation and prosecution of any form or type of crimes involving or dealing with the economic and financial crimes under scrutiny.

xiv) Integrating all the current economic and financial offenses, investigating units in Nigeria.

xv) Maintaining a liaison with office of the Attorney-General of the Federation, the Nigerian Customs Service, the Immigration and Prison Service Board, the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and all such government security and law enforcement agencies in eradication of economic and financial crimes.

xvi) Implementation and maintenance of stringent publicity/enlightenment program against economic and financial crimes in and outside Nigeria.

vii) The performance of any such other acts as are necessary or expedient to the complete discharge of all or any of the functions vested on it by this Act.

Theoretical Framework

As per Banjoko (1996) Within Timothy (2002) model is defined as the network of reasoning which encompasses theories, reasoning, concepts and assumption of some observed events and phenomenon and expounds on how these events and phenomenon relate to the subject of current study. This research relies on the theoretical foundation of the structural functional theory that was advanced by Talcott Parson in the late 1930s as one of the assumptions of this theory is that some functional requirements have to be met in order to help a society survive. In other words, functional subsystems must exist so that the society can survive. The subsystems will be expected to do their roles in an admirable fashion. Functions via definition are the contributions of a particular item or subsystem to support and hold the entire. The society is thus, systematized into distinct arrangement of parts (structures) or subsystems that assume different number of responsibilities (functions) in an independent and coordinated way to accomplish societal goals and objective (Ugwuja, 2016:49). Structural functional theory has come to be known as one of the most innovative efforts which seek to guarantee that a deeper insight is made into the societal process which inevitably translates to societal growth and sustainability.

What is relevant about the theory is that Nigerian state is constituted by variegated structures tasked with the performance of one or a set of functions with the aim of promoting the survival of the country. An example of such structure is the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) which was formed in order to launch unwearying war against the monster-corruption. The degree to which the commission carries out its mandated duties with credit will to a great extent help in deterring incidences of corruption to the barest minimum in the country.

That is to say that the successful work of EFCC in its discharge of its assignment will promote and support the survival of Nigeria in the facet of development since it has been contended that corruption has been a curse of development in Nigeria.
But we are not insensitive to the fact that there are other structures like the Nigeria Police Force. Army and even ethnic sentiments and other elements that constantly create or ruin these smooth runs of the EFCC in the execution of its many Herculean task.

Research Methodology

The study design of this research is based on the qualitative approach of collecting and analyzing data that is related to the research problem. The qualitative techniques prove especially helpful in gaining deep insights and background information, which facilitates research instruments development. Aneke (2012) notes that such an approach makes it possible to extract, illuminate, and interpret valuable information that is central to making meaningful conclusions. The major strength of qualitative research is that it allows one to gain access to the organizational structures and bureaucratic processes that make it possible to discover unexpected phenomena (Aneke, 2012 as cited in Austin, 2014).

A researcher used secondary data because the phenomenon under investigation and data needed to test the hypothesis were this way. According to Aneke (2012), secondary data is information gathered by other people, including documents, survey findings, archives, and similar materials. Books, journals, internet sources, government publications, and encyclopedias were used as the basis of data collection. This methodology has been adopted considering the fact that the study will use secondary data. Content analysis was applied to analyse data because it aids in summarising data verbally and recognising how different variables are related (Asika, 1991). The qualitative descriptive approach made it possible to present and interpret the data briefly in a written form.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The data presented and discussed in this chapter will be founded on content analysis.

3.1 Sources of corruption in Nigeria.

Corruption has been a major issue in Nigeria, which has hindered economic and social development in the country. Regardless of the fact that the country has a host of natural and human resources, corruption is still rooted in its political, economic, and social processes. In this essay, the major causes of corruption in Nigeria are discussed with the focus on political, legal, economic, and cultural factors leading to the perpetuation of corruption in the country. The discussion relies on the recent academic literature to give an exhaustive insight into these reasons.

Political System and Power Concentration: The political system of Nigeria has been found to be one of the major causes of corruption since it is characterised by power concentration in the hands of a few elites. The result of this concentration of political power can be a lack of proper accountability structures that can see government officials carry out their duties without fear of sanctions. Patronage and clientelism are deeply-rooted norms in the Nigerian political environment. In a bid to hold on to power, political leaders often utilize their offices to distribute state resources as a reward to their loyalists or voters. These patronage networks generate circumstances where the political elite uses its power in personal interests. As an example, in the periods of previous leaders like Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, rampant cases of political leaders engaging in massive corruption have been reported. Through questionable contracts and unexplained spending, the public money meant to develop infrastructure or provide services to the population was stolen right before the eyes of political supporters and cronies. Nigeria has lacked strong checks and balances in its political system which has enabled such corrupt practices to persist. Political interference compromises the legislative branches and the judiciary that should be the very source of accountability. There are also some extreme cases where strong-willed politicians have been caught to manoeuvre election results by rigging and buying votes to normalise a political culture whereby corruption is always accepted, and no one is ever questioned to tell the truth. This dysfunction on a systemic level complicates the process of delivering effective reforms because the vested elite has an interest in maintaining the status quo, which further contributes to the escalation of corruption within Nigerian politics (Ogundiya, 2009; Okoosi-Simbine, 1993).

Weak Legal and Institutional Structures: The other major contributor factor towards corruption persistence in Nigeria is that Nigeria has weak legal and institutional structures. Although a number of anti-corruption bodies have been formed in the country like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), numerous challenges have deeply affected their effectiveness in dealing with corruption. Political interference is one of the biggest impediments. The corrupt practices of political figures have the potential to derail or stall the activities of anti-corruption institutions making them ineffective. An example is when the immediate former EFCC chairman Nuhu Ribadu was in office, some of their high-profile cases were investigated but many of them ended without much follow up because of political reasons. This is also aggravated by the fact that the Nigerian judicial system is slow so that cases of corruption may take years to be addressed, and by the time justice is served, the corrupt individuals may be gone. Moreover, politicisation of law enforcing bodies and absence of political will at the top of the government have ensured that anti-corruption measures are only applied selectively with regard to the political interests involved. In other instances, our law enforcement agencies have themselves been found guilty of corruption and thus, people do not trust them anymore. The police and customs service have been accused, for example, of seeking bribes, which still fosters a culture of corruption within the system.

Therefore, Nigerians are sure that a corrupt act is not only a widespread phenomenon but also a safe behavior because the effects of such an action are not that serious (Obuah, 2010; Ijewereme, 2015). This impunity culture has rendered the task of Nigeria very hard in dealing with corruption issue.

Socio-Economic Conditions and Poverty: The presence of poverty and inequality are also interconnected with socio-economic conditions that are strongly attributed to the continuance of corruption in Nigeria. In a country with a high percentage of people surviving below the poverty line, some people are forced to engage in corrupt activities to survive. When people in a country have limited access to basic services like healthcare, education and housing they tend to see corruption as the sole means of accessing these. According to Nwankwo (2014), the adverse impact of corruption on the economic development of Nigeria increases poverty and widens the divide between the poor and the rich. The less fortunate in the population are the worst affected when it comes to misallocation or theft of resources. To illustrate, when social welfare or infrastructure development funds are allocated to a corrupt official, the poor are at times left out of services they so badly require. Corruption is not perceived as a vice in most of Nigeria, it is a means of survival. Bribery is also widely practiced by citizens in an attempt to gain access to simple services provided by the government or even jobs that are not supposed to be exclusive to a few individuals. Moyosore (2015) notes that corruption has become a permanent aspect of daily life and is no longer viewed as an aberration, but rather as a necessary evil to survive in a broken system. Moreover, due to a high level of inequality and inadequate infrastructure, the richest Nigerians, who are usually attached to the political elite, still enjoy the fruits of corruption, and the majority of the population lives in poverty. This has led to most Nigerians accepting that corruption is an inevitable aspect of society. The reason why corrupt practices are highly accepted is that it has become even harder to fight against this vice as not only ordinary citizens but also political elites are part of the corruption system (Nwankwo, 2014; Moyosore, 2015).

Cultural Attitudes towards Corruption: The Cultural attitudes also play a vital role in causing corruption in Nigeria. Corruption is not only condoned, but often a cultural norm. Traditional values like reciprocity and patronage, as Nmah (2017) points out, tend to promote corruption. Nigerian society has become infused with the embrace of wealth, no matter the means of attaining it. This culture makes corruption common place and hard to deal with or confront. Transforming these societal norms and promoting ethical behaviour is a major challenge in the efforts towards curbing corruption in Nigeria.

The Role of Oil and Resource Curse: Nigeria being an oil rich economy has been another significant contributor of perpetuation of corruption. The oil industry has brought about immense wealth in addition to what is called the resource curse. As Ijewereme (2015) argues, corruption has been aggravated by the fact that wealth is concentrated in the hands of just few and more so in the political elites. The race to control oil resources has led to corrupt practices in the government and the private sector. This has caused social unrest and economic instability due to the mismanagement of oil wealth which in turn has further entrenched corruption in the political and economic system of the country (Obuah, 2010).

Corruption in Nigeria is profoundly embedded in political, legal, economic and cultural provisions. Weak institutions and a lack of accountability has led to a situation where political corruption thrives without any checks and balances. Also, many Nigerians have had to survive on corruption as a consequence of socio-economic factors, including poverty and inequality. The fact that this cultural attitude treats corruption as a norm only adds to the problems in dealing with the issue. Last but not least, oil wealth has promoted the accumulation of resources by the elite in Nigeria, which has contributed to the aggravation of the situation. To address the issue of corruption, Nigeria should carry out sweeping changes that will help in institutional strengthening, transparency and cultural change towards corruption.

Achievement of EFCC in the war against Corruption in Nigeria.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was formed in 2003 due to the rising crisis in corruption in Nigeria. The EFCC over the years has been instrumental in the governments fight against corruption in both the government and the corporate world. This has caused it to become one of the focal points in the anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria due to its objectives of investigating and prosecuting instances of financial crimes like money laundering, fraud, and embezzlement. The EFCC has also made significant achievements in its fight against corruption despite the numerous hurdles that it has had to overcome. The paper will discuss the success of EFCC in combating corruption in Nigeria, its major contributions and where it has done tremendous progress.

Development of Anti-Corruption Structures: The development of anti-corruption structures is among the greatest success stories of the EFCC in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Since its establishment, EFCC has established numerous systems and mechanisms to examine and prosecute high profile corruption cases. The regulation of impunity that was linked to corrupt people in positions of power has been a major step taken by the commission in the prosecution of politically exposed persons (PEPs). In fact, the EFCC has helped in the investigation and prosecution of cases involving top government officials under the leadership of Nuhu Ribadu, and thus, making a big difference in bringing awareness to the masses on the issue of corruption. The EFCC has also partnered with other global law enforcement agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in ensuring that financial criminals are taken to book wherever they may be, inside or outside Nigeria (Obuah, 2010). This cooperation has enhanced the ability of the commission to fight transnational financial crimes, thereby enhancing the image of Nigeria internationally in the fight against corruption.

Convictions and Successful Prosecutions: The other outstanding performance of the EFCC is its success in high profile convictions. Since its inception, the EFCC has been engaged in the prosecution of various high-profile individuals, most of whom played prominent roles in the Nigerian politics. A major success of the commission was the conviction of a former governor James Ibori of Delta State, who was convicted of money laundering and stealing state funds. This belief and other successful cases of corrupt politicians and businessmen being prosecuted, indicated to the people of Nigeria that no citizen should be above the law, no matter how they are placed within the society. The EFCC has also gone a long way in going after key financial criminals who are involved in big time corruption including those involved in oil theft and fraud. Such beliefs have played a negative role of deterring such behaviors since most of the government officials and corporate powers are now aware that they can get prosecuted by the EFCC (Obuah, 2010).

Year	Person Convicted	Crime	Conviction Outcome
2015	James Ibori (Former Governor of Delta State)	Money laundering, embezzlement	14 years imprisonment (UK)
2016	Diezani Alison-Madueke (Former Minister of Petroleum)	Corruption, money laundering	Fleeing, case pending in the UK
2017	Joshua Dariye (Former Governor of Plateau State)	Embezzlement, money laundering	14 years imprisonment
2018	Timipre Sylva (Former Governor of Bayelsa State)	Corruption, money laundering	Nolle prosequi, case pending
2019	Nigerian Oil Thieves	Oil theft, corruption	Multiple convictions
2020	Orji Uzor Kalu (Former Governor of Abia State)	Corruption, embezzlement	12 years imprisonment
2021	Rasheed Ladoja (Former Governor of Oyo State)	Money laundering, corruption	6 years imprisonment
2022	Abdulrasheed Maina (Former Pension Reform Boss)	Corruption, embezzlement	8 years imprisonment
2023	Femi Fani-Kayode (Former Minister of Aviation)	Corruption, money laundering	8 years imprisonment
2024	Andrew Yakubu (Former NNPC MD)	Corruption, money laundering	6 years imprisonment

Source: Guardian. (2025, February 4, July 5).

Enhancing the Anti-Corruption Education and Public Awareness: Besides its prosecutorial success, the EFCC has also done much in terms of ensuring anti-corruption education and public awareness. The commission has also tried to sensitize Nigerians about the risks of corruption and the essence of transparency in governance by conducting workshops, seminars and running public campaigns. The outreach programmes undertaken by the EFCC have sought to create solidarity with the people on anti-corruption activities by explaining to them the negative impacts of corruption on the growth of Nigeria. To illustrate, the EFCC has launched a program called the Keep it Clean campaign to instill integrity in youth in Nigeria and discourage the culture of accepting corruption as a way of life. Through this method of education, more awareness has been created about corruption as not merely a legal but also a moral and social problem (Obuah, 2010). People are becoming more aware, particularly the youths of Nigeria, a culture of transparency and accountability is being imparted and this is the key to making long term improvements in the efforts against corruption.

Challenges of EFCC with corruption in Nigeria

In Nigeria, a nation with a history of rampant financial crimes, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was formed in 2003 to fight corruption in that nation. Despite the tremendous progress witnessed in the EFCC to prosecute controversial personalities and educate the masses on the evils of corruption, various challenges continue to undermine the process. These have been occasioned by internal and external factors, which have compromised the effectiveness of the commission in the accomplishment of its mandate. In this paper, the author has discussed the major problems that have been experienced by the EFCC in combating corruption in Nigeria such as political influence, insufficient resources, weaknesses in institutions, and social aspects.

Lack of Political Will and Political Interference: Political interference is one of the greatest problems facing the EFCC. In a nation where corruption is a major part of politics, influential political figures have always tried to interfere or sabotage the EFCC operations. They are the figures that at times put pressure to halt investigations or even avoid processing of those in authority. In fact, under the previous EFCC Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, a number of high profile cases were either stalled or their findings mutated under political influences (Obuah, 2010). This problem is also aggravated by the fact that no political will has been forthcoming by successive governments. Whilst there is an indication that some administrations have shown an interest in combating corruption, the political elite mainly does not offer the required support to EFCC activities. These include poor funding, absence of legislative support, and non-enforcement of anti-corruption policies over time (Ijewereme, 2015). As such, lack of authority and autonomy tend to impede the work of EFCC, as it becomes hard to conduct the work of the commission without certain external interferences.

Resource Constrains and Lack of Infrastructure: This is another important barrier to the effectiveness of EFCC as it has resource constraints. Although it remains one of the top organizations charged with the responsibility of fighting corruption, the commission is usually funded and manned insufficiently. The EFCC, according to Ibrahim (2017), has limited resources to successfully conduct investigations, especially when it comes to major financial crimes committed by influential figures or multinational companies. Furthermore, the EFCC experiences problems with the technical infrastructure, including the availability of forensic equipment and other specialised skills required to trace financial fraud. The limitation is a disadvantage to the commission as it is unable to thoroughly probe and indict the complex cases of corruption and especially a case that involves large amounts of money, or an intricate international network. There is no strong database and forensic power, so the EFCC tends to work with the old techniques, which slows down its development dramatically.

Weaknesses in institutions and a lack of independence: This is also a major weakness of the EFCC in its fight against corruption; they lack independence in institutions. Although this agency has been established as an independent agency, it has endured a lot of challenges to its independence. Corruption within the organization and political interference with its functions has undermined trust in its capabilities to fulfill its mandate. As an example, the EFCC itself has been accused of corruption with some of the staff members said to be taking bribes or have been accused of corruption. This corruption within the commission undermines its credibility and discourages its operations as an independent agency aimed at combating corruption (Obuah, 2010). More so, EFCC legal system is not well-organized to protect against political manipulation especially when it is the political leaders in question. As much as the commission has achieved, these institutional limitations do not allow it to maximize on its potential to combat corruption in totality.

Attitudes of the Society and Perception of the People: Besides internal and external issues, societal views towards corruption are also a major challenge to the work of the EFCC. Nigerians have been conditioned into embracing corruption as a way of life as a survival mechanism. Ajayi (2018) points out that a culture of corruption is so widespread in the name of survival due to poverty, unemployment, and social inequality that people consider bribery and other corrupt means as the only way to access basic services or opportunities. This culture of tolerating corruption is a challenge to the operations of EFCC because it must not only combat corruption in government and business but also combat the attitudes of people towards corruption. The campaign to sensitize the masses on the harmful consequences of corruption and to foster accountability have achieved little success, given that corruption still remains in the minds of many as a part of social and economic life. Such complacency of the society towards corruption is a big setback towards the success of the EFCC in the long run.

To summarize, EFCC has achieved a lot in combating corruption in Nigeria, but its successes are ever marred by various challenges. The challenges faced by the commission include political interference, resources, institutional weaknesses and societal attitudes. In order to adequately fight corruption, it is important that Nigeria enhances the autonomy of the EFCC, affords it the resources it needs to operate and addresses the cultural aspects that facilitate the success of corruption. The EFQ can only be a better tool in preventing corruption in Nigeria when it is thoroughly reformed.

Conclusion

Since it was established in 2003, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has also played a critical role in combating corruption in Nigeria. During the course of 2015 to 2025, the EFCC has achieved considerable progress in targeting prominent individuals who engage in financial misconduct and helping the public understand the harmful impact of corruption. In a move to ensure that it eliminates corruption, the agency has been instrumental in the investigation and conviction of cases that have involved embezzlement, money laundering and oil theft among other financial offences. The arrest of high-profile businessmen and politicians has been particularly encouraging, indicating that no one is above the law, no matter his social standing.

Nonetheless, various challenges have slowed the growth of the EFCC. Another major challenge that the agency faces is political interference, which usually involves influential individuals trying to use the agency to gain political influence, at the expense of its independence. The effectiveness of the EFCC has also been hampered by resource constraints through shortage of adequate funding and sophisticated investigative equipment. In addition, institutional vices like corruption within the commission itself have served to undermine its ability to perform its functions even more. The social perception of corruption as a way of life remains a challenge, and it is challenging to change the perception of people and encourage accountability.

Finally, although the EFCC has been relatively successful in its war on corruption, its performance is undermined by a number of issues such as political interference, insufficient resources and toleration of corruption in society. In order to build the capacity of the EFCC to fight corruption, the Nigerian government needs to focus on empowering the agency, equipping it with the resources it needs, and working on cultural attitudes that foster corruption. Long-term success of the agency in the creation of a more transparent and accountable Nigerian society relies heavily on comprehensive reforms and steady public support.

Recommendations

1) Enhancement of Institutional Autonomy: To address the problem of political interference, the Nigerian government will have to enact legal changes to make the EFCC independent of politics. This may involve strengthening the agency organization by ensuring there are constitutional safeguards and open operational practices. Also, the establishment of an independent

oversight body not connected with politics would make the decisions of the EFCC impartial and based on combating corruption. This sort of empowerment of EFCC will make it more credible and effective in addressing corruption within different sectors.

2) Allocation of more funds and resources: The Nigerian government ought to give more funds to the EFCC to overcome its financial limitations. This involves supplying the agency with new forensic equipment, new investigative technologies, and specialised employee training. Infrastructure and technological investments will allow the EFCC to be better equipped to deal with more complex cases of corruption; making sure large-scale financial crimes are fully investigated. Enough resources will be necessary in order to maintain the activity of the agency and enhance its ability to fight corruption in a more productive way.

3) Public Education and Cultural Change: In order to tackle the social tolerance to corruption, EFCC must focus on more vigorous campaigns to educate the masses to change their mentality. These efforts must aim at sensitizing the people on the negative consequences of corruption in the long run and the role of transparency and integrity. Working with schools, religious institutions, and community leaders would assist in inculcating values of accountability at a tender age. A change of attitude of the people towards zero tolerance to corruption will offer an enabling platform to anti-corruption activities in Nigeria.

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