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PERCEIVED IMPACT OF WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA (A STUDY OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIME COMMISSION – (EFCC)

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of war against corruption in Nigeria, *using EFCC as the focal point. The objective being; to examine the various forms of corruption, the impacts of EFCC in arresting corruption; as well as to ascertain whether or not the EFCC has succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Total sample size of (363) respondents were randomly selected out of (5084) personnel from the fourteen (14) Zonal Directorates in Nigeria - (Abuja, Makurdi, Kaduna, Sokoto, llorin, Ibadan, Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Uyo, Enugu, Gombe, Maiduguri, Kano and Kaduna). Average of (26) respondents were randomly selected from each of the fourteen (14) Zonal Directorates in Nigeria. A questionnaire titled: War Against Corruption Nigeria Survey Questionnaire (WACNSQ), which was constructed for the respondents, containing 12 items and design on a 4-point Likert scale, was used for data collection in the study. The research instrument was validated by experts from department of EFCC and Measurement and Evaluation Personnel. The instrument was trial tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The data was collected and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The study anchored its theoretical framework on Social Contract Theory. Fundamentally, the study recognized that in Nigeria, there were various forms of corruption undermining the economy, with little or no impacts of EFCC in arresting corruption; as well as signals showing that EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in the country It was recommended that .the government at all levels should embark on aggressive enlightenment in the political platforms and media through jingles, while holding or organizing political stakeholders' forums to educate Nigerians about the various forms of corruptions, their duties and obligations, as well as the negative effects of corrupt practices on the functioning of democracy in Nigeria. It was further recommended that the role of Nigerian government must include the formulation of policies and laws that could help improve the economic and social wellbeing of the members of the agency, as well as the citizens. Finally, the government at all levels should strengthen EFCC and shun political interference in investigation and prosecution of offenders to ensure the effective functioning of the democratic system in Nigeria.*

Keywords: War against corruption, Economy, EFCC personnel, Political stakeholders, Enlightenment, Investigation, Prosecution of offenders.

Introduction

Fraudulent activities, economic mismanagement, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency have been the bane of the economy. Fraud and criminality remained elusive and therefore brought inefficiency in the system, especially in the public sector. This menace led to the establishment of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2002 by an Act of the National Assembly which was later amended in 2004. It was borne out of the determination of the Federal Government to root out corruption and sanitize the Nigerian economic environment by enforcing all economic and financial crimes laws (Obialor, 2019). So far, the Commission has been able to and still recording successes in several areas of its mandate. Among others, it has recorded several convictions on corruption, money laundering, oil pipeline vandalism and related offences. Assets and money worth over $11 billion have been recovered from corrupt officials and their cohorts (Fagbo, 2020). The Commission is tenacious with over 65 high profile cases at advanced stages of prosecution in several courts in Nigeria and over 1500 other cases in court and secured over 600 convictions. Before then there were other provisions of Financial Crimes Laws such as: "Money laundering amendment Acts 2003, No 7; 1995; The Advance fee fraud and other related offences Act 1995 as amended; The failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and financial malpractices on Banks Acts 1994 as amended; The Banks and other financial institution Act 1991 as amended and; Miscellaneous offences Act 1983.˜ Any other law or regulations relating to economic and financial crimes including the Criminal code and penal code. The commission is also designated to Nigerian financial intelligent unit (NFIU). It is thus, substantial that our problem is not the absence of legislation (Law) or the deficiencies in them but the total neglect to enforce them have been the plight of disaster (Garba, 2019).

Corrupt practices did not begin today; the history is as old as the world. Ancient civilizations have traces of widespread illegality and corruption. Thus, corruption has been ubiquitous in complex societies from ancient Egypt, Israel, Rome, and Greece down to the present (Lipset & Lenz, 2020:112). This does not, however, mean that the magnitude of corruption is equal in every society because some countries are more corrupt than others (Transparency International, 2001). In the Nigerian case, corruption is known to impact almost every facet of human organization, including the public bureaucracy, security agencies and financial institutions among others (Dike, 2015). The significance of this is that while corruption is a global phenomenon, it appears to have become more endemic and problematic in Nigeria, prevalent among both the leaders and followers. Transparency International (2021) defines corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain." This has become a common act in Nigeria, and it has destabilized the political system drastically. Government funds are being misappropriated on a daily basis by the leaders, who only put the interest of their family and friends at heart while ignoring the masses (Akinnola, 2013). The corruption has eaten so deeply into the government and economy that everyone seems to be blinded by it, Corruption has almost become an

accepted way of life in Nigeria (Ucha, 2010).

In Imo State for example, the government's income is generated mostly from federal allocation. This income, instead of being used for developmental purposes, is then circulated among the political office holders and their families, leaving the rest of the people to wallow in poverty (Alkali, 2020). This could have inspired Umeh & Ubah (2022) to observe that political leaders practically ignore the affairs and wellbeing of their people who elected them into office, noting that they mismanage and embezzle funds. They contend that there are several issues associated with bad governance in Nigeria, which include; use of wrong policies, adaptation to wrong policies and implementation of those wrong policies. In any case, it is clear that corruption in Nigeria has increased poverty and inequality as well as contributed to high crime rates (Sommer, 2017).

In order to allow for a better understanding of the various forms of corruption, Scholars have over time classified corruption in various groups. For instance, Akpan (2020) classifies corruption into five groups: political corruption, economic corruption, bureaucratic corruption, judicial corruption and moral corruption. Dike (2015) also argues that there are three major ways to classify corruption: political corruption which is also known as grand, bureaucratic or petty corruption and electoral corruption. The most important thing is that whatever form corruption manifests, it perverts public interest and unlawfully elevates private gain which is glaringly daunting the hope of democracy in Nigeria. Due to some broader and holistic studies on corruption most especially in Nigeria, corruption can be in (but not limited to) the following forms. These classifications according to Onyema (2021) are:

i. **Political Corruption:** This is a form of corruption that takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs when the politicians and political decision-makers, who are saddled with the responsibility to formulate, establish and implement the laws on behalf of the people, are themselves corrupt. It also takes place when policy formulation and legislation is tailored to benefit politicians and legislators (Dike, 2015). Political corruption is sometimes seen as similar to 'corruption of greed'; as it affects the manner in which decisions are made, as it manipulates political institutions, rules of procedure, and distorts the institutions of government. Political corruption is also activities manifested and connected with election and successions. This is done by the politicians or political decision makers manipulating people and institutions to retain power and office (Akpan, 2020).

ii. **Bureaucratic Corruption:** This kind of corruption has been branded 'low level' or 'street level corruption in Nigeria.' It is the kind of corruption the

citizens encounter daily at places like the local government councils, state government headquarters, hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police stations, tax offices, etc. Bureaucratic 'petty' corruption, which is seen as similar to 'corruption of need,' occurs when one obtains a business from the public sector through inappropriate procedure (Dike, 2015:97).

iii. **Embezzlement:** This is another form of corruption which has to do with theft of public resources by public officials. Embezzlement is when a state official steals from the public institution in which he/she is employed (Adebakin & Raimi, 2012). In Nigeria, the embezzlement/extortion of public funds is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps, due to lack of strict regulatory systems.

iv. **Bribery:** The payment that is taken or given (either in cash or kind) is a corrupt relationship. Bribery has some metaphorical allusions like "kickbacks", "gratuities", "pay-off", "sweeteners", "greasing", "long leg", "bottom power", "chop I chop", "scratch my back", etc. are all euphemisms for corrupt behaviour (Comas, 2021); Egwemi, 2012). Besides the above, fraud is another heinous form of corruption. It involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling and forgery (Comas, 2021).

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is a Nigeria law enforcement agency that investigates financial crimes such as Advance Free Fraud (419 Fraud) and money laundering. The EFCC was established in 2002 partially in response to pressure from the Financial Action Task Force on money laundering (FATF), which named Nigeria as one of the countries of non-cooperative in the international community's efforts to fight money laundering. However, the operations of the EFCC extended to the Fourth Republic with little or no impact on eradicating corruption (Onyeka, 2021). According to Mike (2018), the Nigeria Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has been one of the vocal and at times controversial anti-corruption agencies in Africa. For him, the EFCC has been instrumental in charging and prosecuting senior political leaders and businessmen with political links, as well as in recovering and repatriating significant stolen resources for the Nigeria state. He points out that it is also subject to frequent political interference, which reduces its effectiveness, arguing that it is often seen as an arm of the incumbent government, without an independent mandate. The organization has also recently started investigating fraud in the private sector and in some high profile cases, and has been acting almost like the debt collection agency (Umeh, 2021).

Not all of the EFCC's failures are its own fault, for example according to Onyema (2021), there are enormous institutional hurdles to any honest effort to prosecute corruption in Nigeria. At a fundamental level, Nigeria's political system continues to reward rather than punish corruption. When ruling party chieftain Olabode George emerged from prison in 2011 after serving a two-and-a-half year sentence following a landmark EFCC prosecution, he was treated to a rapturous welcome by members of Nigeria's political elite including former president Obasanjo and then-defense minister, Ademola Adetokunbo. The message was unmistakable, proven criminality is no bar to the highest echelons of politics in Nigeria (Onyema, 2021). Another case of EFCC prosecution was that of the "Maina Pension Scam". Here, according to Edward (2022), there was a probe into pension funds that affected about 141,790 pensioners. Abdulrasheed Maina, the Chairman of Pension Reform Task Team, was accused of looting N195billion. The EFCC was the matter. During investigation, Mr. Maina alleged that Aloysius Etuk, representing Akwa Ibom State, demanded $100,000 dollars from him as bribe. A former director of pension in the office of the Head of Service of the Federation, Sani Shuaibu Teidi, who was prosecuted along with 31 others, also alleged that Mr. Etuk and other members of the committee collected a bribe of N3 billion from him. Although the Senate seemed furious about the allegation, it did not take decisive steps to investigate (Mike, 2018). In some EFCC cases, the appearance of judicial impropriety has also been striking. When the EFCC brought 170 criminal counts against former governor James Ibori, a judge sitting in Ibori's home state threw out every single count, including evidence that Ibori paid EFCC officials $15 million in an attempt to influence the outcome of the investigation. The judge ruled that the EFCC had failed to produce a written statement by the man who allegedly conveyed the bribe corroborating their version of events (Oyeyipo, 2021)).

Recently, Nigeria attempts on fighting corruption focusing mainly on one of the principal anti-corruption institutions, the EFCC, which as we have seen has failed to curb corruption especially among the political class (Obigwe, 2022). Rather than secure the conviction of the corrupt officials, the reason it was established, EFCC has become politicized and neck-deep in damaging controversies, losing its credibility in the process (Alkali, 2020). It is now seen by some as a mere instrument for witch-hunting political enemies. Its dismal performance has been partly due to its own many internal contradictions and administrative problems, but more fundamentally, to systematic factors outside its control, ie. the prevailing neo-patrimonial orientation of the political class who politicized the exercise and use the deficiencies in the legal system to frustrate attempts to combat corruption in Nigeria. This has destroyed public confidence in the ongoing efforts to fight corruption and eroded the legitimacy of the principal agency for the war against corruption in Nigeria (Edward, 2022).

According to Akpan (2020), the Act mandates the EFCC to combat financial and economic crimes and the Commission is

empowered to prevent, investigate, prosecute and penalize economic and financial crimes. For him, the EFCC is charged with and has been investigating cases of abuse of office, diversion of public funds through fraudulent award of contracts, tax fraud, illegal bunkering, terrorism financing, capital market fraud, cyber crime, banking fraud, etc. Umeh (2021) on his part, submits that with a mission to curb the menace of corruption that constitutes the clog in the wheel of progress; protect national and foreign investments in the country; imbue the spirit of hard work in the citizenry and discourage the crave for ill-gotten wealth; identify such ill-gotten wealth and confiscate them; build an upright work force in both public and private sector of the economy; and contribute to the global war against financial crimes and terrorism financing; the advent of the EFCC has impacted positively on Nigeria global acceptance being a turning point in the country's anti-corruption crusade. Since its establishment, the EFCC has taken the bull by the horns working tenaciously to fulfill its mandate (Umeh, 2021).

Under the current leadership, it vigorously pursues its mandate of investigating cases earlier highlighted; the Commission has made concerted efforts in identifying, tracing and freezing, confiscating, or seizing proceeds derived from such illicit activities (Ibrahim, 2023). EFCC, from inception, has also played host to the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), vested with the responsibility of collecting suspicious transactions reports (STRs) from financial and designated non-financial institutions, analyzing and disseminating them to all relevant government agencies and other FIUs all over the world. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, was established by an Act of the National Assembly on 12th December, 2002 by the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Following the appointment and confirmation by the Senate, of the pioneer Executive Chairman, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and other administrative officers, the operational activities of the Commission commenced on April 13, 2003. The establishment of the Commission was partly in response to pressure from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Money Laundering, also known by its French name, Grouped Action Financière (GAFI). GAFI is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 (Group of Seven), an inter-governmental political forum consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to develop policies to combat money laundering. FATF had ranked Nigeria as one of the 23 countries that were non-cooperative in the combined efforts to fight money laundering globally. Due to identified inadequacies in the 2002 Establishment Act, the national Assembly repealed it and re-enacted the 2004 Establishment Act was signed into law on 4th June 2004 by President Obasanjo (Ibrahim, 2023).

Mallam Ribadu, the pioneer chairman of the EFCC, was handed the monumental task to midwife the agency. Within a few months of its emergence on the scene, the Commission had forced itself into public consciousness having taken out of circulation all the 419 kingpins (419 in

Nigerian parlance, means offenders whose crimes are contrary to Section 419 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). These where people hitherto considered untouchable (Alkali, 2020). The Fred Ajuduas, the Emmanuel Nwudes, the Maurice Ibekwes, the Ade Bendels, the AmakaAnajembas and the NzeribeOkolis among many others were all arrested and prosecuted. During his term, outside of the headquarters located in Abuja, the Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Kano and Gombe Commands were established each representing the geo-political zones of the country, for ease of operation (Alkali, 2020).

In December 2007, Ibrahim Lamorde, DIG, Retd took over the affairs of the Commission in acting capacity and in January 2008 Mrs. Farida Waziri, AIG Retd, was appointed by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua as the Chairperson of the Commission. Lamorde handed over to Waziri on June 6, 2008 following her clearance and confirmation by the Senate in June 2008. Following his appointment by President Goodluck Jonathan, Lamorde took over from Mrs. Waziri on November 23, 2011 in acting capacity. He was confirmed as substantive Chairman of the EFCC on February 15, 2012. On November 9, 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari replaced Lamorde with Ibrahim Magu as the acting EFCC chairman. In about five years at the helms of affairs, Magu established seven Commands and reopened the Maiduguri office earlier opened by Mrs. Farida but closed due to the activities of Boko Haram in the North East. The seven Commands were: Ibadan, Kaduna, Benin, Makurdi, Sokoto, Ilorin and Uyo (Obigwe, 2022).

In May 2018, the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) announced that 603 Nigerian figures had been convicted on corruption charges since Buhari took office in 2015. The EFCC also announced that for the first time in Nigeria's history, judges and top military officers including retired service chiefs are being prosecuted for corruption (Egwemi, 2021). The successful prosecutions were also credited to EFCC head Ibrahim Magu Under Buhari, Chief Justice of the Nigerian Court, Walter Onnoghen was convicted by the Code of Conduct Tribunal on April 18, 2019 for false assets declaration and accused Federal High Court Judge Adeniyi Ademola resigned involuntarily in December 2017. In December 2019, the country's controversial ex-Attorney General Mohammed Adoke, who was accused of being bribed to grant oil licenses to Shell, was extradited back to Nigeria from Dubai and was immediately arrested (Alkali, 2020).

In May 2020, it was announced that Chinese construction entrepreneurs Meng Wei Kun and Xu Koi were arrested in Sokoto State on corruption charges involving bribes to former government officials in Zamfara State. Mohammed Umar Abba, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), on July 9, 2020 took over the affairs of the Commission on interim basis. Seven months after, on February 24, 2021, the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria confirmed Abdulrasheed Bawa, CFE, CAMS, whose name was submitted by President Muhammadu Buhari as the substantive Executive Chairman of the Commission. According to Ubah (2021),

Bawa took over from Umar Abba on 5th March, 2021. "Following suspension of Mr. Abdulrasheed Bawa, as Executive Chairman by the Federal Government on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, Mr. Abdulkarim Chukkol stepped in as Acting Chairman of the Commission. Until this new role, Chukkol was the Director of Operations of the Commission." Magu would also be arrested in July 2020 on corruption charges as well. In December 2020, former Pension Reform Taskforce head Abdulrasheed Maina, who was arrested in the neighboring country of Niger after jumping bail, appeared in Abuja court on a 12-count charge of fraud and money laundering. An accomplice Ali Ndume, a senator representing Borno South, was arrested after jumping bail as well (Comas, 2021).

On 24 January 2016, Chief Olu Falae, a prominent Nigerian politician and former secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria said "Buhari's anti-corruption war is selective and getting out of hand". Olu Falae had earlier been named one of the beneficiaries of the controversial $2 billion arms deal, an allegation he refuted in an interview with The Punch. On 24 August 2015, Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, a former governor of Kaduna State challenged President Muhammadu to probe his military regime between 1983 and 1985 if he was really serious about anti-corruption war. He accused the president of violation of federal character law.[16]On 8 February 2016, Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, the governor of Rivers State and former minister of state for education in the Cabinet of President Goodluck Jonathan accused the president of bias in his anti-corruption war. He said he would rather fight corruption in his own way than to support Muhammadu Buhari's anti-corruption war. On 27 September 2015, Dr. Frederick Fasehun, the founder of Oodua Peoples' Congress advised the president to shun selective justice and focus on good governance. On 21 January 2016, Fasheun urged the president to slow down in his fight against corruption saying that the government may run into problems in the way the anti-graft war is being handled by the president. He strongly condemned the handcuffing of Chief Olisa Metuh, the National Publicity Secretary of the People's Democratic Party. He described it as unhealthy for Nigeria.

In a report titled "Heavy Knocks For Buhari's Anti-Corruption" published by Sahara Reporters on 31 October 2015, Debo Adeniran, the Executive Chairman of the Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders claimed he had on several occasions, petitioned the president and the anti-graft agencies, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission levying corruption and misappropriation of fund against Babatunde Fashola, a former governor of Lagos State and the incumbent Minister for Power, Works and Housing in the Cabinet of President Muhammadu Buhari.[20] He also mentioned that several allegation of corruption and misappropriation of fund were slammed on Kayode Fayemi, the former governor of Ekiti State, Kemi Adeosun, the incumbent minister of finance, Rotimi Amaechi, a former governor of Rivers State and current minister of transport. He expressed concern on why these people had not been invited by

the anti-graft agencies for questioning. He said "We are dissatisfied with the way the anti-corruption war is being fought and we are afraid that we may not achieve anything better than what we had before Buhari assumed office." (Achumba, 2017)

In January 2016, Bishop Hyacinth Oroko Egbebo of Apostolic Vicariate of Bomadi , during the consecration of a Catholic priest under his vicariate, expressed concern over what he described as "high level of impunity and abuse of human rights in the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari". He accused Buhari of selective anti-graft war. He raised a concern over how Buhari disobeys court order in his fight against corruption. He said "In as much as we would want to commend President Buhari on his zero tolerance on corruption, it is very disheartening and a risk to our democracy that the President would have the impunity to set aside court orders under the guise of his anti-corruption war". In January 2016, Carol Ajie, a constitutional lawyer petitioned President Barack Obama and National Judicial Council over the disobedience of court order by President Muhammadu Buhari in his fight against corruption. She called for Buhari's resignation or face impeachment proceedings. The petition was signed by over 200 lawyers in the country. As of January 2020, Nigeria ranks low in Transparency International's corruption perception index, achieving a rank of 146 out of 180 countries surveyed (Onyeka, 2021).

On 3 June 2015, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, the former governor of Borno State was arrested by the anti-graft agency, EFCC on alleged misappropriation of 300 billion naira received from the federation account during his tenure as governor of Borno State, between 2003 and 2011 (Garba,2019). Although, the investigation began in 2012 but was intensified in April 2015. Premium Times reported that Sheriff surrendered himself to the EFCC for questioning and was released on bail on 4 June 2015 according to Wilson Uwujaren, the anti-graft agency's spokesperson. Sheriff denied reports in the media that he was declared wanted, arrested and detained by the EFCC. According to Daily Post, a Nigerian newspaper, Sheriff said "I was never invited, the EFCC never said they were declaring me wanted. It was the reports in the media that attracted my attention and I paid EFCC a visit. There was nothing about N300 billion."[29]Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, the Emir of Kano and former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria exposed part of the illegal oil deals during the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan. He raised concern over the failure of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to deposit the sum of $20 billion of oil revenues into the federation account.[30] Diezani Alison-Madueke, the former minister of Petroleum resources named all the persons involved in the deal and others in the controversial concession of oil wells, Jide Omokore and Kola Aluko were named. Jide Omokore had volunteered to return the sum of $500 million to the federation account. In June 2015, six top officials of the Central Bank of Nigeria and 16 other employees of commercial banks were arrested by the anti-graft agency, the EFCC over 8 billion naira currency scam. They were sacked and

arraigned before a Federal High Court sitting in Ibadan, Oyo State, from Tuesday, June 2, 2015, to Thursday, June 4, 2015. They were sacked and imprisoned. In June 2015, President Buhari ordered the EFCC to reopen the $182m Halliburton bribery case following a request by the Federal government of the United States. The U.S government said about $140 million recovered by the government would be repatriated to Nigeria if those involved in the scandal were arrested and prosecuted (Obialor, 2019).

The $2 billion arms deal was exposed following the interim report of Buhari's investigations committee on arms procurement under the Goodluck Jonathan administration. The committee report showed extra-budgetary spending to the tune of N643.8 billion and additional spending of about $2.2 billion in the foreign currency component under the Goodluck Jonathan's watch. Preliminary investigation suggested that about $2 billion may have been disbursed for the procurement of arms to fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Emmanuel, et al 2020). The investigative report indicated that a total sum of $2.2 billion was inexplicably disbursed into the office of the National Security Adviser in procurement of arms to fight against insurgency, but was not spent for the purpose for which the money was disbursed. Investigations on this illegal deal led to the arrest of Sambo Dasuki, the former National Security Adviser who later mentioned prominent Nigerians involved in the deal. Those who were mentioned and arrested includes Raymond Dokpesi, the Chair Emeritus of DAAR Communications Plc, Attahiru Bafarawa, the former Governor of Sokoto State, and Bashir Yuguda, the former Minister of State for Finance, Azubuike Ihejirika, the Chief of Army Staff, Adesola Nunayon Amosu, the former Chief of the Air Staff, Alex Badeh and several other politicians were mentioned (Adagba & Obi, 2022).

Anti-corruption war was an anti-graft campaign launched by the government of Muhammadu Buhari, the 6th democratic President of Nigeria. This is a war against all forms of corruption in Nigeria. During the president's election campaign in 2015, he had vowed to fight against corruption and insecurity if elected. Since his election in April 2015, anti-graft war remain one of his topmost priority. According to Achumba (2017), the U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, at the World Economic Forum held at Davos in Switzerland extolled Buhari's the anti-corruption fight. In October 2015, the United Kingdom pledged her support for Buhari's anti-corruption war. According to Grant Shapps, the minister for international development, "UK is fully committed to helping Nigeria increase its security, stability and prosperity, we would continue to provide capacity building, technical and investigative support to Nigeria to tackle corruption. Corruption in Nigeria also affects the UK directly. Where we have evidence, we will continue to take action to protect the integrity of the UK's financial system and prevent. Some Nigerian described the war as "perfect" while others described it as "selective". William Kumuyi, the founder and general overseer of Deeper Christian Life Ministry described Buhari's anti-corruption war as a step in right direction (Akpan, 2020). However, the

president has been criticized and accused of leading a selective war against corruption. Several people claimed that his war against corruption focus on members of the opposition party, the People's Democratic Party especially using the EFCC.

Statement of the Problem

A nation where financial and economic crimes are endemic cannot attain economic stability, and national security. Nigeria being a country where corruption is pandemic has been rated both domestically and internationally as a corrupt nation. Public officials take huge bribes and the cost of public goods and services are inflated, government often pays for non-existent goods and services. Even when such corrupt practices are exposed, it has always been played to the gallery and sacrificed at alter of backside bargaining. Studies carried out by Mike (2018) and Comas (2021) suggested that the corrupt practices that have characterized and painted the nation black include fraud, embezzlement, falsification of financial information, obtaining by false pretence, lack of transparency and accountability among others. These evils have in no small measure negated economic stability, growth and development in our country. Experience has shown that both the public and private sectors have continued to suffer inefficiency and ineptness and that growth indices and graph are having a downward slope. This has brought the pertinent question, are there adequate control measures and checks to stem this ugly tide (corruption)? According to (Achuba, 2017), poor and insincere policy conception, formulation and implementation on economic and financial crimes in Nigeria have been responsible for the low achievement recorded in curbing and stamping out economic and financial crimes in the country. Hence, the emergence of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to enhance national security in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of war against corruption in Nigeria, using the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) as a study. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the various forms of corruption in Nigeria.
2. To find out the impact of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria.
3. To ascertain whether or not the EFCC has succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the following research questions were posed for the study:

1. What are the various forms of corruption in Nigeria?
2. What are the impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria?
3. Has EFCC so far, succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

Ho1: There is no various form corruption in Nigeria.

Ho2: There are no impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria.
Ho3: EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Research Method

The study adopted a survey research design. The targeted population for the study consisted of all the EFCC personnel in Nigeria. Total sample size of (363) respondents were randomly selected out of (5084) personnel from the fourteen (14) Zonal Directorates in Nigeria (Abuja, Makurdi, Kaduna, Sokoto, llorin, Ibadan, Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Uyo, Enugu, Gombe, Maiduguri, Kano and Kaduna). Average of (26) respondents were randomly selected from each of the fourteen (14) Zonal Directorates in Nigeria. A questionnaire titled: War Against Corruption and Economy Survey Questionnaire (WACESQ), which was constructed for the respondents, containing 12 items and design on a 4-point Likert scale, was used for data collection in the study. The research instrument was validated by experts from department of EFCC and Measurement and Evaluation Personnel. The instrument was trial tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The data was collected and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The decision rule for interpretation of the results for the data analysis was that of a mean score of 2.5 and above, which was regarded as agreed/ accepted while, below 2.5 was disagreed/ rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the various forms of corruption in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Response on the various forms of corruption in Nigeria N = 363

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Political form of corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority.	130 (35.8%) 520	110 (30.3%)330	85(23.4%) 170	38 (10.5%) 38	1,058	2.91	Agreed
2.	Bureaucratic corruption is the kind of corruption the citizens encounter daily at places like the local government councils, state government headquarters, hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police stations, tax offices, etc.	140 (38.6%) 560	105 (28.9%) 315	83(22.9%) 166	35(9.6%) 35	1,076	2.96	Agreed
3.	Embezzlement is another form of corruption which has to do with theft of public resources by public officials.	117(32.3%) 468	102(28.1%) 306	96(26.5%) 192	48(13.2%) 48	1,014	2.79	Agreed
4.	Bribery is payment that is taken or given (either in cash or kind), which has a corrupt relationship	141 (38.8%) 564	104 (28.7%) 312	80 (22.0%) 160	38(10.5%) 38	1,074	2.96	Agreed
	Grand Mean						**2.91**	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 1 revealed that the respondents in all the items with mean scores above 2.50 agreed that there are various forms of corruption in Nigeria (ranging from political corruption, bureaucratic corruption, embezzlement, bribery, etc.). Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 1 is 2.91 which showed that there are various forms of corruption in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Response on EFCC and Arrest of Corruption in Nigeria; **N = 363**

S/ N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
5.	EFCC has been instrumental in charging and prosecuting senior political leaders and businessmen with political links corruption, as well as recovering and repatriating significant stolen resources for the Nigeria state	121 (33.3%) 484	112 (30.9%) 336	91(25.1%) 182	39(10.7%) 39	1,039	2.86	Agreed
6.	EFCC has little or no impact on fighting corruption in Nigeria.	130 (35.8%) 520	110 (30.3%) 330	85(23.4%) 170	38 (10.5%) 38	1,058	2.91	Agreed
7.	EFCC has started investigating fraud in the private sector and in some high profile cases.	120(33.1%) 480	113(31.1 %) 339	91(25.1%) 182	39(10.7%) 39	1,040	2.87	Agreed
8.	EFCC has so far arrested and prosecuted many top politicians in Nigeria.	40 (11.0%) 160	90 (24.8%) 170	111(30.6%) 222	122(23.6 %) 122	774	2.13	Disagreed
	Grand Mean						**2.69**	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 2 revealed that the respondents in items 5, 6 and 7 with mean scores above 2.50 agreed that there are impacts of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) on arresting corruption in Nigeria while, only the respondents in item 8 with mean score below 2.50 disagreed. Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 2 is 2.69 which showed that there are little impacts of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) on arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: Has EFCC so far, succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Response on the success of EFCC in combating corruption in Nigeria; **N = 363**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
9.	EFCC has become politicized and neck-deep in controversies, losing its credibility in the process	36(9..9%) 144	94(25.9%) 282	109(30.0%) 218	124(36.2 %) 124	768	2.12	Disagreed

10.	EFCC has not failed to curb corruption in Nigeria	40 (11.0%) 160	90 (24.8%) 170	111(30.6%) 222	122(23.6 %) 122	774	2.13	Disagreed
11.	The Commission has made concerted efforts in identifying, tracing and freezing, confiscating, or seizing proceeds derived from illicit activities.	118(32.5%) 472	102(28.1%) 306	98(27.0%) 196	45(12.4%) 45	1,019	2.80	Agreed
12.	There are many successful prosecutions credited to EFCC in Nigeria	31 (8.4%) 124	99 (27.3%) 297	113(31.1%) 226	120 (33.1%)	767	2.11	Disagreed
	Grand Mean						**2.29**	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 3 revealed that only the respondents in item 11 with mean scores above 2.50 agreed that EFCC had so far succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria while, the respondents in items 9, 10 and 12 with mean score below 2.50 disagreed. Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 3 is 2.29. This underscores the fact that majority of the respondents believe that the EFCC has so far not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There are no various forms of corruption in Nigeria.

Research Questions 1 and 2 are relevant for the hypothesis one.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis one, table 1 was used.

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
130	140	18,200	16,900	19,600
110	105	11,550	12,100	11,025
85	83	7,055	7,225	6,889
38	35	13,30	1,444	1,225
363	**363**	**38,135**	**37,669**	**38,739**

$$r = \frac{n\sum X Y - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2)\,(n\sum Y^2) - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where, $\sum X = \sum Y = 363$, $\sum X^2 = 37,669$, $\sum Y^2 = 38,739$, $\sum XY = 38,135$.

$$r = \frac{4\,(38,135) - (363)\,(363)}{\sqrt{(4(38,135 - (363)^2)\,(4(38,739 - (363)^2)}}$$

$$r = \sqrt{(150,676 - 131,769)\,(154,956 - 131,769)}$$

$$r = \frac{20,771}{\sqrt{(18,907)\,(23,187)}}$$

$$r = \frac{20,771}{\sqrt{438,396,609}}$$

$$r = \frac{20,771}{20,938}$$

$$r = 0.9920$$

Since the calculated value of r, 0.9920 is greater than 0.5, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. Which means that there are various forms of corruption in Nigeria as; r calculated value is above 0.5, indicating strong relationship between the two variables. In view of this, we hold that there are various forms of corruption in Nigeria (ranging from political corruption, bureaucratic corruption, embezzlement, bribery, etc.).

Hypothesis Two: There are no impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Questions 3 and 4 are relevant for the hypothesis two.

Table 5: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis three, table 2 was used.

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
121	130	15,730	14,641	16,900
112	110	12,320	12,544	12,100
90	85	7,650	8,100	7,225
40	38	1,520	1,444	1,444
363	**363**	**37,220**	**36,729**	**37,669**

$$r = \frac{n\sum X\,Y - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum Y)^2)\,(n\sum Y^2) - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where, $\sum X=\sum Y =363$, $\sum X^2=36,729$, $\sum Y^2=37,669$, $\sum XY =37,220$.

$$r = \frac{4\,(37,220)- (363)\,(363)}{\sqrt{(4(36,729)-(363)^2)4(37,669)-(363)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{148,880, - 131,769}{\sqrt{(146,916-131,769)\,(150,676-131,769)}}$$

$$r= \frac{17,111}{\sqrt{(15,147)(18,907)}}$$

$$r = \frac{17,111}{\sqrt{551,213,489}}$$

$$r \quad \frac{17,111}{18,741}$$

$$r=\underline{0.9130}$$

Since the calculated value of r, 0.9130 is greater than 0.5, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. Which means that there were impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria as; the r calculated value is above 0.5, indicating relationship between the two variables. Based on this, we hold that there are little impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria**.**

Questions 9 and 10 of the questionnaire items are relevant for the hypothesis three.

Table 6: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis three, table 3 was used.

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
36	40	1,440	1,296	1,600
94	90	8,460	8,836	8,100
109	111	12,099	11,881	12,321
124	122	15,128	15,378	14,884
363	**363**	**37,127**	**37,391**	**36,905**

$$r = \frac{n\sum X\,Y-(\sum X\,\sum Y)}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2-(\sum Y)^2)\,(n\sum Y^2)-(\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where, $\sum X=\sum Y=363$, $\sum X^2=37,391$, $\sum Y^2=36,905$, $\sum XY=37,127$.

$$r = \frac{4(37,127) - (363)(363)}{\sqrt{(4(37,391)-(363)^2)4(36,905)-(363)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{148,488 - 131,769}{\sqrt{(148,508-131,769)(159,620-131,769)}}$$

$$r = \frac{16,719}{\sqrt{16.739 \times 27.851}}$$

$$r = \frac{16,719}{\sqrt{466,197,889}}$$

$$r \quad \frac{16,719}{40,225}$$

$$r = \underline{0.4156}$$

Since the calculated value of r, 0.4156 is less than 0.5, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the alternative hypothesis. Which mean that EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria as; the r calculated value is less 0.5, indicating low relationship between the two variables. Sequel to this, we hold that EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria, (for example, there are many unsuccessful prosecutions by the EFCC in Nigeria, the commission has become politicized and neck-deep in controversies, losing its credibility in the process, etc.)

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one, revealed that there are various forms of corruption various forms in Nigeria. Further review showed that there are varieties of corruption in Nigeria which is endemic; have become common act in the country, as well as destabilized the political system drastically. For example, Akpan (2020) classified corruption into five groups: political corruption, economic corruption, bureaucratic corruption, judicial corruption and moral corruption. In consonance with result, Dike (2015) also argued that there are three major ways to classify corruption: political corruption which is also known as grand, bureaucratic or petty corruption and electoral corruption. The most important

thing is that whatever form corruption manifests, it perverts public interest and unlawfully elevates private gain which is glaringly daunting the hope of democracy in Nigeria. In support of finding, Onyema (2021) posited that due to some broader and holistic studies on corruption most especially in Nigeria, corruption can be in (but not limited to) the following forms: political corruption, bureaucratic corruption, embezzlement and bribery; confirming our Ha1, that Corruption have various forms of in Nigeria.

The test of hypothesis two indicated that there are little or no impacts of EFCC in arresting corruption in Nigeria. More assessment showed that the impacts of EFCC are not enough to arrest corruption in Nigeria. For example, Onyeka (2021) argued that the operations of the EFCC extended to the Fourth Republic with little or no impact on eradicating corruption. Supporting result, Mike (2018) stated that the Nigeria Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has been one of the vocal and at times controversial anti-corruption agencies in Africa. For him, the EFCC has been instrumental in charging and prosecuting senior political leaders and businessmen with political links, as well as in recovering and repatriating significant stolen resources for the Nigeria state. He pointed out that it is also subject to frequent political interference, which reduces its effectiveness, noting that it is often seen as an arm of the incumbent government, without an independent mandate. Corroborating the finding, Umeh (2018) the organization has also recently started investigating fraud in the private sector and in some high profile cases, and has been acting almost like the debt collection agency. Again, according to him, the advent of the EFCC has impacted positively on Nigeria global acceptance being a turning point in the country's anti-corruption crusade. For him, since its establishment, the EFCC has taken the bull by the horns working tenaciously to fulfill its mandate; upholding our Ha2, that there are little impacts of EFCC on arresting corruption in Nigeria.

The test of hypothesis three has shown that EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria. For instance, Obigwe (2022) observed that recently, Nigeria attempts on fighting corruption focusing mainly on one of the principal anti-corruption institutions, the EFCC, which as we have seen has failed to curb corruption especially among the political class. This position is supported by Alkali (2020) who stated that rather than EFCC securing the conviction of the corrupt officials, the reason it was established, the commission has become politicized and neck-deep in damaging controversies, losing its credibility in the process; arguing that it is now seen by some as a mere instrument for witch-hunting political enemies. For example, Alkali (2020) posited that Mallam Ribadu, the pioneer chairman of the EFCC, was handed the monumental task to midwife the agency. Within a few months of its emergence on the scene, the Commission had forced itself into public consciousness having taken out of circulation all the 419 kingpins (419 in Nigerian parlance, offenders whose crimes are contrary to Section 419 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

These where people hitherto considered untouchable. Corroborating the result, Oyeyipo (2021) stated that EFCC's dismal performance has been partly due to its own many internal contradictions and administrative problems, but more fundamentally, to systematic factors outside its control, that is, the prevailing neo-patrimonial orientation of the political class who politicized the exercise and use the deficiencies in the legal system to frustrate attempts to combat corruption in Nigeria. He added that this has destroyed public confidence in the ongoing efforts to fight corruption and eroded the legitimacy of the principal agency for the war against corruption in Nigeria; confirming our Ho3, that indicated that EFCC has not succeeded in combating/arresting corruption in Nigeria.

Conclusion

It has been a worthwhile examining the impacts of war against Corruption in Nigeria Economy, using EFCC as a focal point. Research has revealed that not all of the EFCC's failures are its own fault. According to Onyekaba (2021) for example, there are enormous institutional hurdles to any honest effort to prosecute corruption in Nigeria. At a fundamental level, Nigeria's political system continues to reward rather than punish corruption. The message in Nigeria today has proved that criminality is no bar to the highest echelons of politics in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made that:

1. The government at all levels should embark on aggressive enlightenment in the political platforms and media through jingles, while holding or organizing political stakeholders' forums to educate Nigerians about the various forms of corruptions, their duties and obligations, as well as the negative effects of corrupt practices on the functioning of democracy in Nigeria.
2. The government should occasion effective training and retraining exercise for the EFCC personnel to ensure the reformation of the officers and men of the agency. Again, the role of Nigerian government must include the formulation of policies and laws that could help improve the economic and social wellbeing of the members of the agency, as well as the citizens.
3. The government at all levels should strengthen EFCC and shun political interference in investigation and prosecution of offenders to ensure the effective functioning of the democratic system in Nigeria.

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