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Does the Adoption of TSA as a Central Electronic Revenue Collection Really the Solution? Evidence from Nigeria

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Abstract

The crave for technological device or innovation to forestall, mitigate and resuscitate the economic challenges encountered by developing countries in the world is laudable and impressive. However, the growing urge for these technologies raises this question- is technology a prerogative for accountability? Drawing from a case study research design, this study evaluates the impact of such technologically driven idea towards countries economy in corrupt societies. The findings highlight that the failure to check and strike a balance between the new digital idea and the traditional system makes the whole process more vulnerable to corrupt practices. These observations are not meant to discourage the use of 'treasury single account' (TSA) or other technologically innovative ideas like 'integrated personnel payroll information system' (IPPIS) that could serve as a solution towards harnessing the economy of Nigeria. Therefore, the analysis draws attention to the importance of more careful assessments of the problems, as well as the benefits of such innovative ideas – in attempt to achieve the set objectives.

Keywords: *Public institutions, Treasury-single-account, Technological device, Corrupt practices*

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Background to the Study

There has been an increasing rate of countries adopting a financial policy of Treasury Single Account (TSA) all over the world. Recently, developing countries see it as a policy that could revitalize many years of unaccountability which would enable them reposition their economy and stand firm to compete with other developed countries in the world. The accounting systems operated by different government in Nigeria through its Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) were fragmented, therefore, these MDAs of government used these accounts for different operational transaction heads, revenue generation and remitted them periodically within the ambit of financial regulations (Okwe, Nelson, Adeoye, & Ogah 2015). This arrangement was seen by some analysts to be helpful since it would enable MDAs to approve and retain some fund for their operational and overhead costs. The underlying factor with these arrangements is that instead of becoming an avenue to assist these MDAs in its operational challenges, it became an avenue for looting of government revenue by heads of MDAs (Mboto, Offiong & Ibor, 2017; Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017). Therefore, this made Nigeria government under the former president Goodluck Jonathan to propose for a Treasury Single Account (TSA) as a public treasury management tool that would ensure accountability and transparency. The setting up of this policy started in 2015 under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari (Eme, Chukwurah & Iheanacho (2015). The hope is that it will enhance the economy of Nigeria in two main ways: to ensure effective aggregate control over government cash balance; reduction of transaction costs during budget execution, notably by controlling the delay in the remittance of government revenues, and by reducing the scope for more corrupt practices and generating greater clarity and transparency in these financial institutions.

The un-deniable fact is that Treasury Single Account (TSA) and other technological related ideas like Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIS), Government Integrity Finance Management Information (GIFMI), Automated Accounting Transaction and Reporting System, (AATRS), would help in strengthening Nigerians' economy. This idea assumed that this "process unities all inflows of revenue from MDAs through commercial bank deposits into a unified single account at the CBN" (CBN, 2015 as cited from Mboto et al 2017; Yusuf & Chiejina, 2015). The unification of these bank deposits into a single account will help to "check idle bank account balances of these MDAs and avoid unproductive retention of funds" in other to reduce unnecessary borrowing of funds meant to cover an identified shortage (Lienert, 2009). This means that TSA is a necessary condition for managing cash inflow and out flow of government resources. However, despite how logical this assertion may be, it does not take away the fact that it would be carried out by individuals through the use of machines; therefore, it may only reduce the corrupt practices based on the number of people that are involved. Contrary to this assertion, it could be said that when many people engage in these activities (account), it will serve as a check on other people. This is because people who engage in these fraud activities are the leaders, who use their authority with less regard to rules and procedures (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017) and not ordinary citizens who are just subordinates to these leaders. Similarly, it would be necessary to state that in most African states, new policies are meant to indicate that there is a change in the government/administration. Every new government/administration always tries to impress the masses by engaging in one activity or another even when their sincerity is in doubt (Okoye et al, 2021a). Taken from the above point, the change in any policy or administrators occur when these leaders/administrators are not comfortable with the people that are engaged in that activity (policy implementers), they (administrators) could opt for change just to handicapped those people whom they felt that does not represent their interest (Okoye et al, 2021b). Financial institutions and technological driven innovative ideas can actually be used to fix some irregularities arising from abuse of financial impropriety if it can be harnessed properly. Although, this is not the major problem facing Nigeria and other African fledging economy as there are other linking variables to it.

Our analysis was anchored on the existing discussions in relation to Treasury Single Account (TSA) (Mboto, Offiong & Ibor, 2017; Effiong, Oro, Ogar, Raphael, Etop & Iroushu 2017; Bashir 2016; Enofe, Afiangbe & Agha 2017; Nwankwo 2017; Olorunnishola & Fasina 2018; Okerekeoti & Okoye 2017; Bolaji, Gray & Campbell-Evans 2015; Guidelines for the operation of treasury single account by state governments in Nigeria 2016; Ahmed-Gamgum & Ahmed 2018; Otemu & Rita 2018; Agbe, Terzungwe & Igbabee 2017; Uzochukwu, Republic & Olohi 2017; Pattanayak & Fainboim 2010; Badejo, Oluwaseyi, & Taiwo 2017; Eme, Chukwurah & Iheanacho 2015; Pattanayak & Fainborm, 2011).

While many of these works discussed extensively in support of the treasury single account introduced in Nigeria, our major contribution is: firstly, to demonstrate and as well as streamline how it could be marred by irregularities if a better procedural arrangement is not properly placed. Secondly, it is important to state that, the rush for this technologically innovative idea does not actually allow or consider its unintended challenges especially in societies where technology is still at its nascent stage. Thirdly, the placement of emphasis on its benefits alone could enthrone an incomplete picture of what the policy is which could undermine its operations. Therefore, the objective of this study is evaluating the treasury single account and its impact on Nigerian economy.

Origin of the Treasury Single Account in Nigeria

Following the urgent need to restructure, retain and find a lasting solution to the financial leakages caused by different Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria led to the introduction of Treasury Single Account (TSA). Its introduction was based on the 1999 constitutional provision of Nigeria- section 80 and 162 which states that "all revenue expended are captured in the national budget and are authorized by the National Assembly" (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999). Efficient management and control of government's cash resources rely on government banking arrangements.

Nigeria, like many other third world countries, adopted fragmented systems in handling government receipts and payments. Setting up an integrated platform as suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where all government finances are collected in a single account is likely to minimize borrowing expenses, widen credit and advance government's economic policy among other benefits to government. It was also suggested by the IMF that in setting up such unified structure, there is need to back it up by law to guarantee its heftiness and stability. The introduction of the Treasury Single Account policy therefore, was essential in reducing unnecessary bank accounts operated by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) towards promoting financial accountability among governmental organs (Onyekpere, 2015). Accordingly, Pattanayak & Fainboim (2010) noted that any government that does not have adequate control of its fund can suffer from this in several ways. First, cash lying idle in the Deposit Bank Accounts (DBA) hardly earn market-related profits accrued to it. Second, government, having no knowledge of this would keep borrowing to meet up with any perceived shortage of fund. Third, cash lying low in these commercial banks are not idle for the banks because it can still incur costs on the central bank (Pattanayak & Fainboim, 2010, p. 5).

Its establishment led to the closure of over 20,000 bank accounts owned by the MDAs (Aderopo, 2019; Economic Confidential Report, 2017). The closure of these accounts contributed in no little way in safeguarding the leakages its opening has created. Consequently, the TSA initiative has enabled the Federal Government of Nigeria to take full control of over 3 trillion Naira ($15 billion) of its cash assets as at the end of the first quarter in 2016. Data has it that it has saved the country almost N9 trillion since it was implemented which could be shown in the N24 billion it saves the Federal Government (FG) monthly (Adepegba, 2018).

This has not only helped in recovering a lot of fun both lying and misused ones but has equally indicated that something can be done to checkmate and make Public Financial Management (PFM) more viable in Nigeria. The problem with Nigeria is not only in recovering of fund but in real application of those recovered funds into meaningful projects that can sustain the economy of the country. This is because a lot of funds have been recovered from late Abacha's loot, yet, it has not been properly accounted for. Little wonder the directives issued by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) to the Federal Government reveal in details the accurate public funds stolen by the former Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, and how it was spent by the successive governments since the return of democracy in 1999 (Nwannekanma, 2020).

The introduction of Treasury Single Account (TSA) in Nigeria is a good development but should not be seen as a solution to the economic challenges befalling the country. This is because; there are other agencies like Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) that have been established in the country with a view to forestalling the leakages in her economy but all to no avail. Essential points to note in all these are; first, the urgent need to introduce Treasury Single Account in a country that lack advance payment and settlement systems or an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) may be a misnomer. Second, its introduction with little or no effort to articulate other challenges in agencies like "Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Code of Conduct Bureau among others" (Ojo, 2019) which supposedly would have sorted it out may lead to its abuse. Third, a policy of this nature is necessary when it is backed up with political will without responding to or treating some agencies as 'sacred cow' and others as 'scape-goat'. Fourth, any policy blue print that would not be transparent in its operation as to attend to problems it was meant to solve can hardly translate into realities.

Methods

Two methods of data collection were used in this study. Firstly, data was generated through a careful documentary method. This method enabled us to make a critical review of scholarly works relating to the subject matter. Similarly, Payne and Payne (as cited in Mogalakwe, 2006, p.221), 'documentary method is the technique used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain'. Documentary method is always necessary because of its in-depth information, concept explanation that aid instrument design, and to carry out pilot studies (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006). We were able to review literature on well written works on Treasury Single Account (TSA), laws and statutes that led to its introduction in Nigeria.

Following the documentary method is the adoption of cross-sectional study with selected agencies, institutions and parastatals across six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The choices as well as the selection of these institutions, agencies and parastatals were done in consideration of their role and the services they render. This study was carried out to ascertain the relevance of Treasury Single Account (TSA) and other technologically innovative ideas introduced in the country. The six States covered from the six geo-political zones are: South-East – Enugu; South-South – Rivers; South-West – Lagos; North-West – Kano; North-Central – Plateau; and North-East – Gombe. The study was carried out from September 12, 2021 – March 15, 2022. This period covered was to elicit information that could enhance the study. Three different cases of non-probability sampling method were used for the study. The need for this sampling technique is to provide the researcher with the necessary data or information (Asika, 2010) that would be required in the study. The survey was sent to the respondents through mail. The questions were structured in line with the objectives of the study. A total of 360 questionnaires were used, therefore, 60 questionnaires were sent to each of these States respectively.

Results and Discussion

Among the 360 respondents that fill the questionnaire, 200 (55.56%) were male, while 160 (44.45%) were female. Ten (2.78%) of these respondents were heads of the agencies, institutions and parastatals. Age of the participants ranges between 25 and 65 years old. Most of the respondents 252 (70%) were staff of these institutions that have basic knowledge about the introduction and implementation processes of TSA in Nigeria. In view of respondents' information about TSA, 75% of them believe that TSA can help to forestall leakages from different institutions, MDAs and other government parastatals if a better procedural arrangement is properly placed. They were knowledgeable that the number of policy inputs made may not be the solution rather, the ability to check and strike a balance between the policy input and its output. They were also aware that instigating factors that led to loss of funds in the public sectors are greed, selfishness, avarice, lack of integrity, lack of contentment 335 (93.06%). Also, 320 (88.89%) of respondents understand the need for stringent measures to curtail leakage of funds from public institutions. Previous studies have shown that TSA could block financial leakages from the Public Financial Management (PFM). Such works include Ahmed, (2016); Mboto, Offiong & Ibor, (2017); Effiong, Oro, Ogar, Raphael, Etop & Iroushu (2017); Bashir (2016); Olorunnishola & Fasina (2018); Bolaji, Gray & Campbell-Evans (2015); Guidelines for the operation of treasury single account by state governments in Nigeria (2016); Ahmed-Gamgum & Ahmed (2018); Otemu & Rita (2018); Pattanayak & Fainboim (2010); Badejo, Oluwaseyi, & Taiwo (2017).

In contrast with these studies, 225 respondents which represent 62.5% participants stated that TSA is likely to fail if the Nigerian government did not consider the problem encountered in some agencies like EFCC, ICPC and CCB which was instituted to fight corrupt practices in the country. Many of the respondents saw factors like design issues of TSA (250 or 69.44%), coverage of the policy (220 or 61.1%), bank account structure (320 or 88.89%), transaction processing arrangement (300 or 83.33%), accounting and reporting system (215 or 59.72%), instability in the power sector (315 or 87.5%), and technical know-how (261 or 72.5%) as a major challenge to the policy. Also, they have seen the following as major controversies to the full implementation of TSA: no specific details of legal framework on its operation (270 or 75%), negative application of waivers in its implementation (240 or 66.67%), platforms like e-Transact, System Specs, Interswitch e.t.c were not properly adopted (285 or 79.17%), and non-capture of dollar earning agencies (265 or 73.61%).

Concerning the centralized electronic revenue collection, table 1 showed that (75%) of the respondents agreed that a better procedural arrangement be put in place to avoid unnecessary hitches in the implementation processes. However, (25%) of the respondents opposed the idea of revisiting the arrangement procedures. Among those who opposed the idea of reviewing the arrangement procedures, (22%) of them said it is not necessary if the implementation process is not backed up with political will. This is consistent with the work of Fatile & Adejuwon (2017) which shows that implementation of TSA will be successful if the political will of those in the government could be enhanced.

Table 1: Respondents' responses towards centralized electronic revenue collection (n = 360)

	Yes, n(%)	No, n(%)	I don't know, n(%)
Do you feel that a centralized account would be a solution to all the corrupt practices being witnessed in the public institutions?	116(32.2%)	235(65.3%)	9(2.5%)
Do you agree that an existing legal framework in the country is a barrier to the full implementation of TSA?	222(61.7%)	119(33.6%)	19(5.3%)
Do you think that some forms of autonomy given to certain MDAs could be a hindrance to the ease operation of the TSA?	194(53.9%)	138(38.3%)	28(7.8%)
The reasons for saying "**YES**" to reliance on centralized electronic revenue collection *n* (%)			
a. It will help to recover idle cash lying fallow in different banks		56 (48.3)	
b. It will enable the government to know the exact fund in its disposal		79 (68.1)	
c. It will enable different agencies and institutions to be accountable		108(93.1)	
d. It serves as an avenue of recovering funds by the government		47 (40.5)	
e. It will help to strengthen the economy of the country		88 (75.9)	
f. It will help to forestall leakages emanating from insincerity of different agencies		99(85.3)	
g. Cash lying idle in the banks hardly earn any profit for government		62(53.4)	
Total		116 (100)	
The reasons for saying "**NO**" to reliance on centralized electronic revenue collection			
a. The Nigerian government has not put in necessary measures towards achieving it		216 (91.9)	
b. Technology is not a prerogative for accountability		200 (85.1)	
c. Technologically innovative ideas do not settle the issue of integrity in public institutions		217 (92.3)	
d. Many people would prefer the old accounting system		100 (42.6)	
e. It has a negative effect on the commercial banks		98 (41.7)	
f. It has not been backed up with political will		214 (91.1)	
g. The rush for TSA does not allow for consideration the challenges it comes with		172 (73.2)	
h. Efficient management of government fund depends onits careful arrangement		165 (70.2)	
i. TSA has different models and each model comes with its peculiar problems		84 (35.7)	
j. TSA is likely to lose its worth with time in Nigeria		212 (90.2)	
Total		235 (100)	

The above analysis indicates that centralized electronic revenue collection may not serve as solution to the corrupt practices in the public institutions. The primary reason given by these respondents was that implementation process of TSA has to do with careful arrangement of its procedures (165/235 or 70%). Another reason given by these respondents is that it has not been backed up with political will (214/235 or 91%). These respondents went further to state that technology is not a prerogative for accountability (200/235 or 85%) neither does it settle the issue of integrity in the public institutions (217/235 or 92%). Accordingly, literatures are awash with issues pertaining to non-accountability in the public sector management in Nigeria (for details, see Okwoli, 2004; Bello 2001; Appah and Appiah, 2010; Okoh & Ohwoyibo, 2010; Kaufman, 2005). A better approach to the role of accountability in relation to this work is to view two approaches of (Coker, 2010): a. process-based accountability (looks at the rate of compliance with the standard set); and b. performance-based accountability (measurement of accountability together with broad objective).

Although, its introduction in many developing countries is good because it is believing to assist them in strengthening their economy and realizing its policy objectives (Idris, 2017). However, the challenge it comes with is quite enormous. Firstly, the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) which was seen to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of TSA in the country has not been properly managed. Being an ICT based system for budget management in other to improve Public Expenditure Management (PEM), of different countries; it is expected to regulate financial operations to ensure stability and accountability in the use of public funds. It is instructive to know that, effective and efficient application of GIFMIS is dependent on the personnel with the requisite knowledge to carry out such task. This has been the major issue in the African sub region where lack of expertise, less attention to capacity building, and weak human resource management has failed to address and improve organizational structure of its economy (Pennacchi, 2006; Murphy, 2002). This is consistent with the works of (Enofe, Afiangbe, & Agha, 2017) that the implementation of GIFMIS will not eradicate corrupt practices in the Nigerian public sector.

Secondly, there is no one-way TSA model or design. Therefore, every country adopts the design/model commensurate with the level or degree of its development. Each of these models or designs comes with its peculiar problem and challenges. Given this fact, it takes a leader with political will to lay down operational procedures and processes which would be binding to all the agencies. For instance, in a well-developed accounting system, it is always advised/encouraged to set up one TSA for the central and sub-national governments but managing such in Nigeria may lead to unintended consequences. On the one hand, no government whether at the Centre or state government would want to be checkmated by the other due to some nefarious activities they do engaged. On the other hand, checks and balances of these governments that do not lead to an intended outcome can bridge a wide gap between cash inflows and outflows of the Public Financial Management (PFM) in Nigeria.

Table 2: MDAs' uncertainty of remittance of funds generated through TSA (*n* = 360).

Within the period of its operation in Nigeria	n(%)
1. Some funds generated through TSA were not properly accounted for by some MDAs	261(72.5%)
2. Platforms that could enhance the scheme like e-Transact, System Specs, Interswitch, and NIBSS were not properly adopted	237(65.8%)
3. The boundaries between the public corporation and government sectors, and the limit of the operational independence is not clearly stated	209(58.1%)
4. The autonomy of many higher institutions of learning is being threatened	156(43.3%)
5. Agencies that earn in foreign currencies has not been captured by the TSA	265(73.6%)
6. The legal framework gives no specific attention to operational details of TSA	270(75.0%)
7. The idea of making quick money makes some head of agencies notto remit some funds generated through TSA	224(62.2%)
8. Some funds were being operated outside the TSA by the MDAs in corroboration with some banks	197(54.7%)
9. Proper compliance to TSA has made remittance of funds easier	217(60.3%)
10. Waivers in the implementation of TSA could be negatively applied	240(66.7%)

The uncertainty on the remittance of funds generated through TSA found its way in the existing institutional and legal framework in the country. This lapse has been the primary reason why some MDAs and institutional heads kick against TSA during the initial process of its introduction. In kicking against it, some have actually devised means of boycotting remitting funds generated through TSA. Some MDAs like Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigerian Custom Service (NCS), and Department for Petroleum Resources (DPR) have financial autonomy granted to them by legislation together with powers to keep a fund from which to pay for expenses and even to invest surplus funds and maintain a reserve. Taking a cue from NNPC Act, Section 7 (4) a and b indicates that the corporation shall retain a fund which consists of money being generated while in operation or as it relates to the exercise of its functions, from which it would settle all the expenses incurred before remitting the balance to the federation account. Contrary to this NNPC Act, is it's inconsistent with the Section 53 of Fiscal Responsibility Act and 162 of the 1999 Nigeria Constitution as amended (Amadi & Obutte, 2018, p. 110). Different Acts established in some of these MDAs are generating a lot of controversies towards a free flow implementation process of TSA policy in Nigeria. As argued by Okerekeoti & Okoye, 2017) a properly established TSA will be difficult for Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) to spend outside the purview or limit of approved budget provisions. This could account for the reason why its operation in Nigeria is still seen as a sketch of the original policy of the World Bank.

For instance, there is a detailed report of unremitted deductions of about ₦3.79 billion directly linked to over 40 government agencies, including the Presidency, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and National Assembly, which would have gone to the treasury through the TSA (Chijioke, 2019). Accordingly, (Okwe, Chijioke, & Otaru, 2018) revealed an unremitted sum of N2.81t which was held back by Government-Owned Enterprises (GOEs). Taken together, this was contrary to the two basic arguments of (Larson 2007; Ekubiat & Ime,

2016) that firstly, the introduction of TSA will remove organizational secrecy of public institutions and enthrone transparency and accountability in the Public Financial Management system (PFM). Secondly, the revenue generating agencies that have not been rendering proper accounts to the government through the operation of illicit bank accounts will no longer succeed in such operations.

Although, during the introduction of treasury single account in Nigeria, effort was made by the government to set up implementation strategies based on the Ministry, Department and Agencies (MDA) categorization. While the above figure shows different MDAs and the implementation strategies that should be adopted in the country, it was not explicit. For instance, the wordings used were mainly on future tense. That is, it focuses more on what is to be done and failed to match it with how it can be achieved. Secondly, there is no better monitoring processes that could make these institutions at all levels abide by the stated implementation strategy. Perhaps, this is plagued by the inability to redistribute the income from the single treasury back into the economy by ways of fiscal and expansionary monetary of government. However, issues linked to cash management have arisen and should be properly dealt with by regulatory authority.

Table 3: Respondents' responses on borrowing, outstanding debt and burden of transaction Cost ($n = 360$).

	n(%)
1.TSA implementation has reduced the borrowing cost of the government	227(63.1)
2. Government tends to borrow less because of fund in its disposal	263 (73.1)
3. Determining cash position of government reduces unnecessary borrowing either in budget planning or in its execution	311 (86.4)
4. The fund realized from TSA has not been properly utilized	219 (60.8)
5. The cost of maintaining TSA is outrageous	199 (55.2)
6. Government has botched the agreement it reached with the service providers of TSA	187 (51.9)
7. The transfer of transaction cost to individual citizens raises concerns on the efficacy of the policy output	200 (55.6)
8. The CBN effort to ensure adequate compliance among the MDAs has not been effective	224 (62.2)
9. It has not paved way for timely payment of revenue accrued to government treasury	183 (50.8)
10. Non-transparency of TSA operators has led to increase in government borrowing	235 (65.3)
11. We recognize the difference between innovation, technology and a better solution	256 (71.1)

The implementation of TSA comes with the high hope of lowering the debt financing costs of a country as surplus funds of some MDAs would be used to finance the deficit of others. This helps to minimize the borrowing cost of government given that this cash is fungible (Adeolu, 2015; Karel and Jaroslava, 2012). As noted in the literature, before the introduction of TSA, it is always difficult to identify the payment outlets for government institutions because of the numerous bank accounts used by these MDAs. These MDAs in most cases use these bank accounts for shady businesses, instead of its original objective of assisting them carryout their daily office works with ease. For instance, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) which their average earnings were at N3million and N4.95billion began to remit as high as N8billion and N24billion after complying with TSA. In 2019, at the beginning of the sales of Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) forms, the agency recorded revenue as high as N1.2 billion in a week despite the cost reduction of its forms from N5,000 to N3,500 (Aderopo, 2019).

Undoubtedly, its implementation has saved the Federal Government of Nigeria about N24 billion monthly. For instance, (Chijioke, 2019) noted that by July 2018, its record has risen to N9.78 trillion in its third year of operations as against N4.21 trillion in its first year. However, it is still difficult for one to understand the operational system adopted by Nigerian government in its TSA implementation. This is because the above analysis indicates that TSA has actually helped Nigerians to recover huge sums of money in its operations but the intrigues accompanied by this is that System Specs (the owner of Remita) was not paid for the first two years of its operations even when the agreement between the Remita and Nigerian government was to pay a charge of 1% which is less than 1.5% and 3% payment system adopted in many other countries (Adepegba, 2018). Consequently, the debt rose above ten billion naira (N10 billion) and the government continues to borrow money to meet up with other financial impropriety of hers.

Therefore, the increase in the TSA balance has not reduced the government level of borrowing to finance its projects. The implementation of TSA started in Nigeria in 2015, yet the hope its introduction raises was dashed in the budget padding experienced in 2016 in the country (Aguguom & Ehiogu, 2016; Odigbo, 2017). This is contrary to (Effiong, Oro, Ogar, Imong, Etop, & Iroushu, 2017) assertion that adoption of TSA in Nigeria has reduced government borrowing and the cost of debt servicing has reduced drastically to perhaps below half of the previous level. Though, it must be stated that, it has certainly uncovered lots of government funds unaccounted for in times past but finds it difficult to recover such funds because there is no extant law specifically made for TSA operations in Nigeria.

Another issue was the transfer of the transaction cost of TSA to citizens with little or no prior knowledge to the members of the public, who actually pay into the TSA amidst the accumulated debt. It is still difficult to believe the acclaimed success of the TSA in the country if the transaction cost of its operation could be shifted to the public. It is possible that fund which has been recovered from the policy, is being spent in its operation. Taking a cue from the first year of its operation in the country, (Chijioke, 2019) noted that out of the N4.21 trillion realized in that year, Remita collected more than N3.65 trillion, while the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), got N287.92 billion and N269.77 billion came from Direct Debit.

Conclusion

The establishments of a unified structure of government bank accounts via a Treasury Single Account (TSA) have not solve the problem of frivolous and unscrupulous spending of Government fund and hence eradicate loss and enhance cash management and control. In this paper, we have actually tried to bring to bear that unified structure through the use of Treasury Single Account or other technologically innovative ideas is quite commendable but it is also clear that a major challenge in its implementation lie heavily on the political will. Thus, it would seem that the chances of a successful implementation would be higher once political will is secured. The general argument that the implementation of TSA will induce good governance capable of having other statistical, economic and financial benefits in the country is achievable if the procedural measures are put in place. The paper has noted some issues concerning the need to revisit policy input in other to strengthen it. Firstly, is the need to note that technology is not a prerogative for accountability and does not settle the issue of integrity in the public offices. While the adoption of technology is not entirely bad, it may be wrong to assume that technology has an answer to every economic challenge facing different countries.

Secondly, in African continent, it was documented that effective applicability, functioning and maintenance of GIFMIS required people with excellent knowledge of technology. This helps the free flow operations for interconnectivity and easy view of account balance at any time. The deficiency witnessed in the technical know-how of people in the region becomes more problem in its implementation. For example, absence of capacity building structure was seen as the major issue holding IFMIS performance process in Ghana (Pennacchi, 2006) while weak personnel management capacity accounted for the disruption of IFMIS implementation in Kenya (Murphy, 2002). Nigeria equally suffers from the capacity building structure meant to enhance TSA operations. Consequently, the urgent need to establish the policy with the attendant benefits it comes with could account for why many developing countries in the world failed to check and strike a balance between the technological idea and the traditional system. The effect of this makes the whole process more vulnerable to corrupt practices where some MDA's will not remit funds collected through TSA platforms or where the recorded/acclaimed success of its implementation could not be seen in the gross domestic products (GDP) of such countries. These findings is not meant to discourage the adoption of technological innovative ideas towards harnessing economy of one's country, rather, the analysis draws attention to the importance of more careful assessments of the problems, as well as the benefits of such innovative ideas – in attempt to derive its objectives.

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