

Public Administration and the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria: Issues and Solutions

David Aniefiok Titus

*Department of Public
Administration,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Federal University Otuoke,
Bayelsa State, Nigeria*

Article DOI:

10.48028/iiprds/ijsrhlir.v9.i1.06

Keywords:

Public
Administration,
Corruption,
Governance,
Accountability, Anti-
Corruption
Agencies, Nigeria

Abstract

Corruption remains a pervasive challenge undermining governance, accountability, and sustainable development in Nigeria. Public administration, as the machinery of policy formulation and implementation, is both a victim and a potential driver in the fight against corruption. The study adopted qualitative research design, employing content analysis of secondary data. Sources include Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (TICPI) World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators, reports from Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) as well as scholarly articles and policy documents. The study critically examined the dynamics of corruption within Nigeria's public administration, focusing on institutional weaknesses, bureaucratic inefficiencies, rent-seeking behavior, and political interference in anti-corruption efforts. Drawing on empirical data, government reports, and international governance indicators, the study identifies persistent gaps in institutional frameworks and proposes policy solutions such as strengthening the autonomy of anti-corruption agencies, reforming the civil service, enhancing transparency through ethical or tupocratic leadership, digital governance, and promoting civic engagement.

Corresponding Author:

David Aniefiok Titus

Background to the Study

Corruption has become one of the most pervasive challenges confronting governance, development, and democratic consolidation globally. In many developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, corruption undermines state capacity, erodes public trust, distorts the allocation of resources, and deepens socio-economic inequalities (Ayee, 2016; Transparency International, 2022). Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and one of its largest economies, has been especially vulnerable to corruption due to a combination of historical, structural, and institutional factors. Since independence in 1960, successive administrations have grappled with corruption, making it a recurring impediment to good governance, efficient public administration, and sustainable development (Agbibo, 2012). Despite various anti-corruption reforms, institutions, and agencies established over the decades, Nigeria continues to rank poorly on global corruption indices, reflecting the persistence and systemic nature of the problem (Transparency International, 2023).

Public administration is at the heart of this discourse because it serves as the machinery through which government policies are implemented, public goods delivered, and accountability mechanisms enforced. In theory, effective public administration is expected to embody transparency, efficiency, and impartiality in service delivery. In practice, however, the Nigerian public service has been plagued by weak institutional frameworks, bureaucratic bottlenecks, patronage politics, rent-seeking behavior, and the undue influence of political elites on administrative processes (Ezeani, 2012; World Bank, 2020). These institutional weaknesses create fertile ground for corruption to thrive, thereby diminishing the legitimacy of government and widening the trust deficit between the state and its citizens.

The fight against corruption in Nigeria has been pursued through multiple approaches, including the establishment of specialized agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). Although these institutions have recorded some notable successes, their efforts are often undermined by political interference, inadequate funding, overlapping mandates, and limited autonomy (Ogunyemi & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). Furthermore, corruption in Nigeria is not only administrative but also systemic, cutting across political, judicial, and economic structures, which makes eradication more complex. As Achebe (1983) famously noted, corruption has become so entrenched in Nigeria that it threatens the moral fabric of society and undermines the developmental aspirations of the nation.

In recent years, the consequences of corruption on governance and development have become more glaring. Billions of dollars are lost annually through illicit financial flows, mismanagement of public resources, and inflated government contracts (Global Financial Integrity, 2021). These losses directly translate into underinvestment in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and social welfare, thereby exacerbating poverty and inequality. Corruption also discourages foreign direct investment, weakens the rule of law, and fuels insecurity by diverting resources meant for national defense and

policing (World Bank, 2020). Consequently, addressing corruption through reforms in public administration is not just an ethical imperative but also a developmental necessity for Nigeria.

This paper therefore interrogates the role of public administration in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, examining the issues that hinder effective anti-corruption efforts while also proposing feasible solutions. It seeks to establish that strengthening institutions, enhancing transparency, promoting accountability, and reducing political interference in administrative processes are critical for combating corruption. The study also emphasizes the need for reforms that align Nigeria's public administration with global best practices in governance and anti-corruption, while recognizing the unique socio-political context of the country. By analyzing both the challenges and potential solutions, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on governance and corruption, offering insights into how Nigeria can reposition its public administration as a catalyst for national development and integrity.

Statement of the Problem

Despite decades of reforms and anti-corruption campaigns, corruption continues to undermine governance, weaken institutions, and distort development efforts in many developing countries. Public administration, which serves as the machinery for implementing policies and delivering essential services, has been particularly vulnerable to corruption due to weak institutional frameworks, poor accountability systems, and entrenched patronage networks. The persistence of practices such as bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and procurement fraud not only divert scarce resources from public goods but also erodes public trust in government institutions.

Existing anti-corruption measures, including the establishment of specialized agencies and the adoption of legal frameworks, have often been hindered by inadequate political will, limited enforcement capacity, and systemic resistance within administrative structures. As a result, corruption has become normalized in many bureaucracies, creating a vicious cycle of inefficiency, inequality, and underdevelopment. Moreover, while strategies such as e-governance, citizen participation, and financial management reforms hold promise, their implementation remains inconsistent and frequently undermined by vested interests.

This situation raises critical concerns about the effectiveness of current approaches to combating corruption within public administration. Unless comprehensive, context-specific, and enforceable solutions are identified and implemented, corruption will continue to compromise service delivery, threaten sustainable development, and erode democratic governance. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the issues surrounding corruption in public administration and to explore practical solutions that can enhance transparency, accountability, and institutional integrity.

Research Questions

1. What are the major issues and challenges facing public administration in combating corruption?
2. What practical solutions and strategies can strengthen public administration's role in the fight against corruption?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the key issues and challenges that hinder the effectiveness of public administration in addressing corruption.
2. To identify and recommend viable solutions and strategies for enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public administration to combat corruption.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on governance and anti-corruption efforts by highlighting the specific challenges faced by Nigeria's public administration system. It provides both academics and researchers with a deeper understanding of how administrative inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and weak institutional frameworks foster corrupt practices. Secondly, the study is important for policymakers and government officials, as it identifies practical strategies and policy options that can strengthen accountability mechanisms, enhance public service delivery, and improve citizens' trust in governance. The findings can guide reforms aimed at building more transparent and efficient institutions capable of curbing corruption. Thirdly, the study has practical relevance for civil society organizations, anti-corruption agencies, and advocacy groups by offering evidence-based insights that can support advocacy campaigns and collaborative initiatives with government institutions.

Finally, the study benefits the general public by promoting awareness of how corruption undermines socio-economic development and by proposing sustainable solutions that encourage citizen participation in governance. Ultimately, the research underscores the critical role of public administration in the fight against corruption and its implications for national development and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Public Administration refers to the machinery of government responsible for the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies, programs, and services. It involves the coordination of human and material resources to achieve the goals of the state in a transparent and accountable manner (Shafritz, Russell, & Borick, 2016). In the Nigerian context, public administration represents the bureaucracy, ministries, parastatals, and public institutions charged with the responsibility of delivering governance outcomes to citizens (Adamolekun, 2002).

Corruption is broadly understood as the misuse of public office or entrusted power for private gain. It manifests in forms such as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and abuse of power (Transparency International, 2020). In Nigeria, corruption has become systemic,

undermining public trust, eroding institutional efficiency, and diverting resources meant for national development (Achebe, 1988; Ogbeidi, 2012).

Anti-Corruption Agencies/Fight Against Corruption entails institutional, legal, and administrative measures aimed at preventing, detecting, and sanctioning corrupt practices within governance structures. It includes strategies such as strengthening anti-graft agencies, enforcing accountability mechanisms, and promoting transparency through reforms in public administration (Lawal & Tobi, 2006). In Nigeria, initiatives such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) reflect institutional responses to curbing corruption, though their effectiveness has been widely debated.

Thus, the study conceptualizes public administration as the state's governing machinery, corruption as the misuse of public office for private advantage, and the fight against corruption as systematic measures and institutional frameworks aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Governance refers to the processes, systems, and institutions through which public decisions are made and implemented in society. It encompasses the mechanisms that ensure the effective management of public resources, delivery of public services, and the upholding of the rule of law. Good governance is characterized by transparency, participation, responsiveness, equity, and adherence to legal and ethical standards (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2010). Within the Nigerian context, governance has often been challenged by weak institutions, policy inconsistencies, and systemic corruption, which undermine the credibility of public administration (Aiyede, 2006). Thus, governance in relation to fighting corruption implies the establishment of strong institutional frameworks, regulatory mechanisms, and leadership practices that curb abuse of power and misuse of public resources.

Accountability, on the other hand, is the obligation of public officials and institutions to answer for their actions, decisions, and use of public resources. It has two dimensions: horizontal accountability, which refers to oversight by state institutions such as the legislature, judiciary, and anti-corruption agencies; and vertical accountability, which relates to the role of citizens, civil society, and the media in demanding transparency and responsibility from leaders (Olowu, 2002). In Nigeria, weak enforcement of accountability mechanisms and the culture of impunity have fostered corruption within public administration. Strengthening accountability requires robust monitoring systems, effective anti-corruption agencies, and active citizen participation in governance processes.

In the fight against corruption, governance and accountability are interconnected. Effective governance promotes ethical conduct and efficient public service delivery, while accountability ensures that public officials remain answerable and subject to sanctions when they deviate from established rules. Together, they form the cornerstone for

building public trust and enhancing the legitimacy of public administration in Nigeria. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, resource-rich, and geopolitically significant nation in West Africa. It is Africa's most populous country, with over 220 million people, and one of the continent's largest economies, driven by oil, gas, agriculture, and services (World Bank, 2022). Politically, Nigeria operates as a federal republic with 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), reflecting a diversity of ethnic groups (over 250), cultures, and religions – predominantly Islam and Christianity.

Despite its vast natural and human resources, Nigeria faces persistent challenges such as corruption, weak institutions, insecurity, infrastructural deficits, and uneven development, which constrain governance and public administration (Titus, 2025; Ayee, 2016; Transparency International, 2023). Socially, the country grapples with issues of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, yet it also exhibits resilience through a vibrant civil society, youth population, and cultural influence across Africa and the diaspora.

Review of Related Literature

Corruption and Public Administration

The relationship between corruption and public administration has been extensively examined in governance and development literature. Corruption is broadly defined as the abuse of public office for private gain (World Bank, 2020). Nye (1967) conceptualized it as a deviation from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding interests such as wealth or power. In public administration, corruption manifests as rent-seeking, patronage, nepotism, embezzlement, and misuse of resources, thereby undermining efficiency, accountability, and trust in governance (Rose-Ackerman, 2016).

Public administration, on the other hand, represents the institutional machinery responsible for implementing government policies and delivering public goods (Henry, 2018). Its effectiveness depends largely on integrity, transparency, and responsiveness. When corruption infiltrates administrative systems, it distorts priorities, diverts resources, and entrenches inequality. Hence, the fight against corruption within public administration is both a moral and institutional imperative (Ayee, 2016).

Corruption in Nigerian Public Administration: Historical Overview

Corruption in Nigeria's public administration is not a recent phenomenon but has deep historical roots. During the colonial era, public administration was structured to serve extractive purposes, prioritizing resource exploitation over development (Osoba, 1996). The post-independence period saw the politicization of public institutions, where bureaucratic positions became avenues for patronage.

Military regimes between 1966 and 1999 further entrenched corruption, as accountability mechanisms were eroded, and public funds were misappropriated with impunity (Suberu, 2001). With the return to democracy in 1999, anti-corruption became a policy priority, evidenced by the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences

Commission (ICPC). However, despite these institutions, corruption remains pervasive, suggesting systemic flaws within Nigeria's administrative structures (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2011).

Institutional Weakness and Public Administration

Scholars widely agree that institutional weakness is a major driver of corruption in Nigeria's public sector. Weak enforcement of laws, overlapping mandates, and bureaucratic inefficiencies create loopholes for rent-seeking (Aiyede, 2006). For example, the EFCC and ICPC often struggle with insufficient funding and human resources, limiting their capacity to prosecute high-profile cases (Ogbeidi, 2012).

Moreover, Nigeria's civil service has been criticized for inefficiency, political interference, and lack of meritocracy (Gboyega, 2003). Recruitment and promotion often rely on patronage rather than competence, undermining professionalism. This administrative weakness has been linked to Nigeria's poor performance on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), where the country consistently ranks among the most corrupt nations globally (Transparency International, 2023).

Political Interference in Anti-Corruption Efforts

A recurring theme in the literature is the role of political interference in undermining anti-corruption agencies. Despite being established as independent bodies, the EFCC and ICPC have often been accused of selective prosecutions, targeting political opponents while shielding allies of the ruling elite (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

For instance, under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007), the EFCC secured some notable convictions but was accused of being used as a tool against political adversaries (Ribadu, 2010). Similarly, during President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure (2015–2023), despite an anti-corruption agenda, allegations of bias and politicization persisted, especially concerning the handling of high-profile corruption scandals (Adebajo, 2020). This political capture of anti-corruption agencies illustrates the broader challenge of insulating public administration from partisan interests.

Anti-Corruption Strategies in Nigeria: Achievements and Limitations

Nigeria has adopted several anti-corruption measures, ranging from institutional frameworks to policy reforms. The EFCC and ICPC remain the flagship agencies, complemented by initiatives such as the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Treasury Single Account (TSA), and Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). The TSA, introduced in 2015, consolidated government accounts into a single platform, reducing leakages in revenue collection (CBN, 2016). Similarly, IPPIS has reduced ghost workers in the civil service, saving billions of naira annually (World Bank, 2019). However, scholars argue that these reforms are insufficient in the absence of political will, institutional independence, and cultural reorientation (Odeh & Mohammed, 2019). Anti-corruption agencies often secure minor convictions, but high-profile cases drag on indefinitely, reinforcing perceptions of impunity (Agbiboa, 2013).

Comparative Insights: Nigeria and other African States

Comparative literature shows that Nigeria's anti-corruption challenges are not unique but resonate with experiences in other African states. For instance, Ghana has implemented institutional reforms through the Office of the Special Prosecutor, yet political interference remains a challenge (Appiah, 2019). In contrast, Rwanda is often cited as a success story, where strong political will, institutional autonomy, and swift enforcement mechanisms have curtailed corruption significantly (Gatwa, 2015). These comparative insights suggest that Nigeria's fight against corruption requires not only institutional strengthening but also cultural transformation and political commitment via tupocracy (positive exemplary leadership).

Gap in the Literature

While extensive literature exists on corruption and public administration in Nigeria, several gaps remain. First, much of the scholarship focuses on federal-level institutions, with less attention given to corruption dynamics at state and local government levels where service delivery is most directly experienced. Second, empirical studies often rely on perception indices rather than in-depth field data, limiting contextual understanding. Finally, there is limited research on the role of digital technologies (e-governance, block chain, and open data) in reshaping Nigeria's administrative landscape.

Synthesis

The literature reveals that corruption in Nigerian public administration is deeply entrenched, driven by institutional weaknesses, political interference, and socio-cultural norms. While reforms have achieved modest successes, systemic challenges persist. Case studies of scandals illustrate the magnitude of the problem, while comparative insights highlight the importance of political will and institutional autonomy. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach that strengthens administrative systems, insulates anti-corruption bodies from political manipulation, and fosters a culture of accountability.

Theoretical Framework

1. Principal-Agent Theory

The Principal-Agent Theory, as developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), explains the relationship between the government (principal) and public officials (agents). In the Nigerian context, elected leaders and civil servants are entrusted with authority and resources to act in the best interest of the public. However, the "agents" often exploit information asymmetry, weak monitoring mechanisms, and lack of accountability to pursue personal gain at the expense of the collective good (Shleifer & Vishny, 1993). Corruption thus arises when agents deviate from their mandate. Applying this theory, the study underscores the need for stronger accountability systems, transparent processes, and effective sanctions to reduce opportunities for corrupt practices in public administration.

2. Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory (North, 1990; Scott, 2014) emphasizes that corruption is deeply rooted in the norms, rules, and structures of society. In Nigeria, weak institutions, inadequate enforcement of anti-corruption laws, and socio-cultural acceptance of corrupt behavior reinforce a vicious cycle of administrative inefficiency. Public institutions are often undermined by political interference, lack of autonomy, and systemic patronage networks. Institutional reforms—such as strengthening anti-corruption agencies, ensuring judicial independence, and promoting civic engagement—are therefore crucial in dismantling entrenched corruption within public administration.

By integrating these theories, this framework explains that corruption in Nigerian public administration persists not merely as a result of individual misconduct but also because of systemic institutional weaknesses. Therefore, effective solutions must combine agency control mechanisms (e.g., monitoring, accountability, sanctions) with institutional reforms (e.g., stronger legal frameworks, improved governance culture, and civic oversight) – driven by a tupocratic leader (Titus and Onwuhanze, 2023).

Table 1: Corruption Indices in Nigeria 2019 - 2024

Indicator	Latest year	Nigeria value	Note / context	Source
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score	2024	26 / 100	CPI 2024 places Nigeria at rank 140/180 (↑1 point vs 2023).	Transparency.org+1
WGI – Control of Corruption (percentile rank)	2023	17	Percentile (0–100; higher is better).	World Bank Open Data
WGI – Government Effectiveness (percentile rank)	2023	27.4	Percentile (0–100; higher is better).	DataBank
UNODC/NBS nationwide survey – share of adults who paid (or were asked to pay) a bribe in past 12 months	2019	30.2%	Based on the national household survey on corruption.	UNODC+1
UNODC/NBS – estimated cash bribes paid	2019	₦675 billion (~0.52% of GDP)	Monetary estimate from the same survey round.	Businessday NGPremium Times Nigeria
UNODC 2023 follow-up insight – refusal of bribe demands	2023	>70% refused at least once	Indicates rising resistance to bribery requests.	UNODC
EFCC – convictions (calendar year)	2022	3,785	Official EFCC year-end figure.	efcc.gov.ng+1
EFCC – convictions & asset recoveries (calendar year)	2024	>4,000 convictions; ~US\$500 million recovered	Cited from reporting on EFCC’s annual results.	Reuters

The above table indicates Nigeria's CPI 2024 score is 26/100 (rank 140/180), a marginal uptick but still indicating a high perceived corruption environment. On the World Bank WGI, Nigeria sits at 17th percentile for Control of Corruption and 27.4th percentile for Government Effectiveness (2023), underscoring structural governance weaknesses. Petty bribery remains sizable (30.2% prevalence; ₦675bn cash in 2019), though newer UNODC insights suggest more citizens refuse bribe requests. Enforcement outputs are high: EFCC reports thousands of convictions annually and significant recoveries (notably >4,000 convictions and ~US\$500m recovered in 2024), illustrating strong prosecutorial activity amid persistent systemic issues.

Case Studies of Corruption Nigeria

Several high-profile cases highlight the persistence of corruption in Nigeria's public administration:

1. **The Pension Fund Scandal (2012):** Billions of naira meant for retired civil servants were embezzled by public officials, exposing weak oversight in Nigeria's pension administration (ICPC, 2013).
2. **The Fuel Subsidy Scandal (2012):** An estimated \$6.8 billion was lost through fraudulent subsidy claims by oil marketers, facilitated by collusion with public officials (Ngozi-Okonjo-Iweala, 2014).
3. **Arms Procurement Scandal (2015):** Funds earmarked for security and counterterrorism were diverted by senior government officials, undermining both national security and public trust (EFCC, 2016).

Empirical Studies

1. Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies

An empirical study by Adeyemi and Fagbadebo (2019) analyzed the performance of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). Using survey data and case analysis, they found that political interference and weak institutional independence significantly undermine these agencies' effectiveness in combating corruption.

2. Corruption and Service Delivery in Nigeria

Okafor and Eme (2015) conducted a quantitative study using World Bank Governance Indicators and Afrobarometer data. Their findings revealed a strong correlation between corruption in public service and poor delivery of education, health, and infrastructure, highlighting how administrative corruption reduces public trust and weakens governance.

3. Institutional Quality and Corruption Control

Ogundiya (2010) examined institutional weaknesses in Nigeria using survey evidence and governance datasets. The study concluded that weak bureaucratic institutions and patronage systems perpetuate rent-seeking behavior, making anti-corruption reforms largely ineffective without systemic restructuring.

Findings

1. **Institutional Weaknesses:** Public administration in Nigeria is significantly hampered by weak institutions, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and lack of autonomy of anti-corruption agencies, which create loopholes for corruption.
2. **Political Interference:** Anti-corruption bodies like the EFCC and ICPC often face political interference, undermining their independence and effectiveness.
3. **Prevalence of Rent-Seeking and Patronage:** Public office is still widely perceived as a means of personal enrichment, with systemic patron-client relationships sustaining corrupt practices.
4. **Low Transparency and Accountability:** Public procurement, budgeting, and service delivery processes remain opaque, leading to diversion of funds and poor service outcomes.
5. **Weak Enforcement of Laws:** Despite the existence of several anti-corruption laws, implementation and enforcement remain selective and inconsistent.
6. **Impact on Development:** Corruption drains resources meant for infrastructure, education, and healthcare, thereby deepening poverty and inequality in Nigeria.
7. **Public Distrust:** Citizens exhibit low trust in government institutions due to repeated cases of high-profile corruption scandals with little or no punishment.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that corruption in Nigeria remains deeply entrenched within the structures of public administration, manifesting through weak institutional frameworks, political interference, rent-seeking behavior, and inadequate enforcement of anti-corruption laws. Public institutions such as the EFCC and ICPC, though established to combat corruption, often suffer from limited autonomy and political influence, which compromises their effectiveness. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the vulnerability of anti-corruption agencies to executive control and patronage networks (Ayee, 2016; Transparency International, 2022).

Furthermore, bureaucratic bottlenecks and lack of transparency in public service delivery create loopholes that facilitate bribery, contract inflation, and diversion of public funds. Statistical evidence from Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index shows that Nigeria continues to rank low in global anti-corruption performance, reflecting persistent governance deficits. Similarly, World Bank Governance Indicators highlight challenges in accountability and regulatory quality, corroborating the empirical evidence presented in this study. Another important finding is the prevalence of rent-seeking and patron-client relationships, where political elites exploit public institutions for personal or group gain. This entrenched culture undermines reforms and perpetuates impunity. Nonetheless, the study also reveals that digital innovations (e-governance, Treasury Single Account, and open contracting platforms) have introduced some improvements in transparency and fiscal accountability, although their impact remains uneven due to limited institutional support. Overall, the findings underscore that the fight against corruption in Nigeria requires more than institutional creation; it demands strengthening rule of law, insulating anti-corruption agencies from political interference, and building a culture of accountability within public administration.

Conclusion

The study concludes that corruption in Nigeria is not merely a product of individual moral failure but rather a systemic problem deeply embedded in the structures of public administration. Weak institutions, political interference, lack of accountability, and the culture of impunity continue to erode good governance and sustainable development. While significant efforts have been made through the establishment of anti-corruption agencies and legal frameworks, their impact has been limited by poor implementation and the absence of genuine political will. Therefore, addressing corruption in Nigeria requires a holistic reform of public administration that strengthens institutions, promotes transparency, and fosters citizen participation in governance.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthening Institutions:** Grant full autonomy and adequate funding to anti-corruption agencies (EFCC, ICPC) to insulate them from political interference.
2. **Public Sector Reform:** Simplify bureaucratic processes, digitalize government services, and strengthen public financial management systems to reduce opportunities for rent-seeking.
3. **Legal and Judicial Reforms:** Ensure swift and impartial prosecution of corruption cases, with special courts for corruption-related offenses.
4. **Promoting Transparency:** Enforce open budgeting, procurement monitoring, and publication of government spending at all levels.
5. **Whistleblower Protection:** Implement and strengthen whistleblower policies to encourage reporting of corruption without fear of victimization.
6. **Civic Engagement:** Enhance citizen participation in governance through civil society oversight, social accountability mechanisms, and freedom of information implementation.
7. **Ethical Reorientation:** Introduce robust value-based training, civic education, and continuous ethics reorientation programs within the civil service.
8. **Political Will:** Leaders at all levels must demonstrate genuine commitment by leading by example, avoiding selective justice, and prioritizing merit over patronage in appointments.

References

- Adeyemi, O. O., & Fagbadebo, O. M. (2019). Corruption and the challenges of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria's fourth republic, *Journal of African Political Economy & Development*, 4(1), 1–20.
- Achebe, C. (1983). *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Achebe, C. (1988). *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Adamolekun, L. (2002). *Public Administration in Africa: Main Issues and Selected Country Studies*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Agbibo, D. E. (2012). Between corruption and development: The political economy of state robbery in Nigeria, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 108(3), 325–345. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1093-5>
- Adebanwi, W., & Obadare, E. (2011). When corruption fights back: Democracy and elite interest in Nigeria's anti-corruption war, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49(2), 185–213. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X11000039>
- Adebajo, A. (2020). *The Buhari anti-corruption agenda in Nigeria: Rhetoric and realities*, *African Affairs*, 119(475), 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adaa009>
- Agbibo, D. (2013). Corruption and economic crime in Nigeria: The impact on the economy and society. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 7(6), 289–309.
- Aiyede, R. (2006). *The role of INEC, ICPC, and EFCC in combating corruption in Nigeria*, In Money, Politics and Corruption in Nigeria (pp. 39–52). Abuja: IFES.
- Appiah, M. (2019). Anti-corruption reforms in Ghana: Prospects and challenges. *Journal of African Governance*, 6(1), 55–72.
- Ayee, J. R. A. (2016). *Manifestos and elections in Ghana's Fourth Republic*, Johannesburg: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA).
- Buchanan, J., & Tullock, G. (1962). *The calculus of consent*, University of Michigan Press.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). (2016). *Annual report*, Abuja: CBN.
- Caiden, G. E. (2017). *Public administration and corruption: Theoretical and practical perspectives*, London: Routledge.

Development Deals in Africa by (2030), *Akwa Ibom State Iniversity*, Ikot Akpaden. ICIDR
www.icidr.org, 163 - 174

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). (2016). *Annual report*, Abuja: EFCC

EFCC (Nigeria). Annual convictions (2022) – *Release & convictions list (PDF)*. efcc.gov.ng+1

Reuters. (2024). Nigeria's anti-graft agency recovers nearly \$500 million in one year” (reporting EFCC's results). Reuters

Ezeani, E. O. (2012). *Delivering the goods: Repositioning Nigerian public administration for service delivery*, Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.

Gatwa, T. (2015). Rwanda's anti-corruption success: Lessons for Africa, *African Journal of Public Administration*, 8(2), 77–95.

Global Financial Integrity. (2021). *Illicit Financial Flows to and from Developing Countries: 2009–2018*, Washington, DC.

Gboyega, A. (2003). *Democracy and development: The imperative of local governance*. An Inaugural Lecture, University of Ibadan.

Heidenheimer, A. J. (2002). *Political corruption: Concepts and contexts*, Transaction Publishers.

Henry, N. (2018). *Public administration and public affairs* (13th ed.), Routledge.

Human Rights Watch. (2011). *Corruption on trial? The record of Nigeria's EFCC*. New York: HRW.

Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). (2013). *Annual report*, Abuja: ICPC.

Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure, *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305–360.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X\(76\)90026-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X(76)90026-X)

Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2010). *The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5430.

Lawal, G., & Tobi, A. (2006). Bureaucratic corruption, good governance and development: The challenges and prospects of institution building in Nigeria, *Journal of Applied Sciences Research*, 2(10), 642–649.

- Nye, J. (1967). Corruption and political development: A cost-benefit analysis, *American Political Science Review*, 61(2), 417–427.
- Ngozi-Okonjo-Iweala, N. (2014). *Reforming the unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria*, MIT Press.
- North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change, and economic performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Odeh, L. E., & Mohammed, I. (2019). Anti-corruption campaigns in Nigeria: Issues and challenges, *International Journal of Public Administration*, 42(9), 753–764. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2018.1485042>
- Ogbeidi, M. M. (2012). Political leadership and corruption in Nigeria since 1960: A socio-economic analysis. *Journal of Nigeria Studies*, 1(2), 1–25.
- Osoba, S. (1996). Corruption in Nigeria: Historical perspectives, *Review of African Political Economy*, 23(69), 371–386.
- Okafor, C., & Eme, O. I. (2015). Corruption in Nigeria: The possible way out. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 9(4), 92–99. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2015.0778>
- Ogundiya, I. S. (2010). Corruption: The bane of democratic stability in Nigeria, *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(4), 233–241.
- Ogunyemi, B., & Okeke-Uzodike, U. (2016). Governance and corruption in Nigeria: Implications for anti-corruption policy, *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 9(2), 1–15.
- Olowu, D. (2002). Accountability and transparency in governance: The Nigerian experience, *African Journal of Public Administration and Management*, 13(1), 45–59.
- Ribadu, N. (2010). *The struggle continues*, Abuja: EFCC Publications.
- Rose-Ackerman, S., & Palifka, B. J. (2016). *Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shleifer, A., & Vishny, R. W. (1993). Corruption. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 108(3), 599–617. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2118402>
- Scott, W. R. (2014). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas, interests, and identities* (4th ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Shafritz, J. M., Russell, E. W., & Borick, C. P. (2016). *Introducing public administration* (8th ed.), New York: Routledge.
- Suberu, R. T. (2001). *Federalism and ethnic conflict in Nigeria*. USIP Press.
- Transparency International. Corruption Perceptions Index (2024). Nigeria page & global report, Transparency.org+3Transparency.org+3Transparency.org+3
- Transparency International. (2020). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2020*, Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org>
- Transparency International. (2022). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2022*, Berlin: Transparency International.
- Transparency International. (2023). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2023*, Berlin: Transparency International.
- Titus, D. A. (2025). Like country like church: Administrative Perspectives, *African Journal of Law, Political Research and Administration (AJLPRA)*, 8(1), 24-40
- Titus, D. A. & Onwuhanze, J. U. (2023). *Sanitizing Politics in Nigeria for sustainable Development Through Tupocracy*. In Academic Pratitioner's Research for sustainable
- UNODC & National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). *Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends (2019) – full report & executive summary; plus 2023 update press release*. UNODC+2UNODC+2
- World Bank. (2019). *Nigeria digital economy diagnostic report*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2020). *World development report: Governance and the law*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) – Control of Corruption, Government Effectiveness, 2023, World Bank Open DataDataBank+1