



Political Integrity and Governance Outcomes in Nigeria: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Date of Submission: 01-03-2024

Date of Acceptance: 08-03-2024

Abstract:

Political integrity and governance outcomes play a vital role in the development and stability of any nation. In the context of Nigeria, a country with a diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic landscape, assessing the impact of political integrity on governance outcomes becomes particularly crucial. This paper examined Political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria. Secondary data were sourced from journal articles, newspapers, the Transparency International website, governmental reports, World Bank reports, etc. The study adopted Democratic Governance as its theoretical framework of analysis and the findings revealed that: Corruption hampers development, undermines public trust, and perpetuates social and economic inequalities. The paper concluded that political integrity has a significant impact on governance outcomes in Nigeria, and therefore, recommended that; anti-corruption measures, institutional reforms, civic engagement, and regional and international cooperation will improve governance outcomes and foster a more flourishing and equitable Nigeria.

Keywords: Corruption, Governance Outcomes, Nigeria, Political Integrity, Public Accountability, Transparency, Rule of Law

I. Introduction:

Nigeria, located in West Africa, is Africa's most populous country and boasts one of the largest economies in Africa (Statista, 2023). Since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria has experienced various challenges related to political integrity and governance outcomes. These challenges have significantly impacted the country's development and its ability to effectively serve its citizens.

Political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria have long been a topic of concern both domestically and internationally. The country's political history has been marked by

periods of military rule, political instability, and widespread corruption. These issues have posed significant obstacles to achieving good governance and have hindered the country's progress towards sustainable development.

In recent years, there have been efforts to address these challenges and improve political integrity and governance outcomes. The Nigerian government has enacted legislation, such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act of 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act of 2004, to combat corruption and enhance transparency. However, despite these initiatives, Nigeria continues to face significant governance challenges. According to the latest Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, Nigeria ranks 149 out of 180 countries, indicating a high level of perceived corruption within the country's governance systems (Transparency International Perception Index, 2020)

This lack of political integrity and governance outcomes has had severe implications for Nigeria's socio-economic development. It has hindered the provision of essential public services, such as healthcare and education while exacerbating poverty and inequalities. Additionally, political instability and corruption have deterred foreign direct investment, hindering economic growth and job creation. Political integrity and good governance are crucial for the sustainable development and stability of any nation. In the context of Nigeria, a country grappling with various governance challenges, understanding the dynamics of political integrity and its relationship with governance outcomes is essential. Thus, the study explored the impact of political integrity on governance outcomes in Nigeria, examining the challenges and potential solutions.



Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy has faced several governance and integrity challenges throughout its history. The nation has struggled with issues such as corruption, lack of transparency, weak accountability mechanisms, and limited citizen participation in political processes. These challenges have significantly affected governance outcomes, hampering social and economic development and undermining public trust in the political system.

Efforts to address these challenges have been made over the years, with the Nigerian government implementing various reforms, establishing anti-corruption agencies, and enacting legislation to promote transparency and accountability. However, despite these measures, political integrity and governance outcomes remain a major concern in the country.

II. Literature Review

Empirical studies on political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria have highlighted several key issues and challenges. Corruption has been a pervasive problem, negatively impacting governance effectiveness. For instance, in a study, Adofu, Aniche, & Buba, (2019) examined Corruption and service delivery in Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that corruption significantly encumbers service delivery, erodes public trust, and undermines political integrity in Nigeria. In a related study, Dike (2019) explored the impact of transparency on governance outcomes in Nigeria and the result indicated that increased transparency is linked with better governance performance. It stressed the need for greater transparency in public financial management and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, citizen participation and engagement have been vital in shaping political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria. In a study, Akpan and Udosen (2020) Investigated citizen participation and governance outcomes in Nigeria. The study found that citizen engagement through civil society organizations and grassroots movements can contribute to improved governance outcomes and political integrity. However, the rule of law has been another crucial aspect of political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria. The study of Ajah and Ude (2020) examined the role of the rule of law in combating corruption and improving governance outcomes. It highlighted the need for a strong and independent judiciary, effective law enforcement

agencies, and adherence to the principle of equal treatment under the law.

Corruption, a major challenge to political integrity in Nigeria, has been found to have significant negative effects on governance outcomes. A study by Igbuzor and Kutumbeka (2016) found a strong association between corruption and poor governance in Nigeria. The study revealed that corruption negatively affects public service delivery, economic growth, and social development. It concluded that corruption undermines political integrity and weakens governance structures, leading to poor outcomes in various sectors.

Similar findings were reported in a study by Transparency International (2019), which highlighted how corruption undermines effective governance in Nigeria. The study emphasized that corruption erodes public trust in institutions, reduces investment inflows, and hampers the delivery of essential services. The report indicated that corruption negatively affects governance outcomes such as health, education, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation.

Further study by Alkali (2015) on the impact of corruption on governance in Nigeria indicated that corrupt practices distort policy-making processes, perpetuate socio-economic inequalities, and hinder development efforts. The study emphasized that corruption undermines transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, thereby weakening governance structures and impeding progress. In contrast, promoting political integrity and combatting corruption have been found to positively impact governance outcomes. A study by Olawale and Adesina (2019) explored the relationship between political integrity and good governance in Nigeria. The study showed that high levels of political integrity, characterized by transparency, accountability, and adherence to ethical standards, enhance efficient service delivery, stimulate economic growth, and promote socio-economic development.

Moreover, the World Bank (2019) highlights the importance of addressing corruption and promoting political integrity to improve governance outcomes in Nigeria. The report underscores that reducing corruption can lead to better service delivery, increased investment, stronger institutions, and improved development outcomes.



In summary, the relationship between political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria is evident. Corruption undermines governance structures, weakens institutions, and hampers progress in various sectors. Conversely, promoting political integrity through transparency, accountability, and ethical standards can lead to improved governance outcomes, including efficient service delivery, economic growth, and social development.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria can be explained using the concept of democratic governance, which emphasizes the principles of accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law (Batuo, 2015; Shabbir & Anwar, 2021).

Firstly, democratic governance promotes accountability in political systems, ensuring that public officials are responsible for their actions and decisions. This framework asserts that political integrity requires holding elected representatives and government officials accountable for their conduct and performance (Batuo, 2015). In Nigeria, accountability mechanisms such as the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) are established to combat corruption and promote political integrity (Ugwu, 2016). Transparency is another key component of the theoretical framework. It emphasizes open and accessible government procedures, information, and decision-making processes. Transparency enhances the integrity of political systems by preventing corruption and enabling citizens to hold politicians accountable (Shabbir & Anwar, 2021). In Nigeria, initiatives like the Freedom of Information Act were enacted to promote transparency by ensuring public access to government information (Uche, 2017).

Participation is an essential aspect of democratic governance that recognizes citizens' right to actively engage in political processes. The theoretical framework suggests that political integrity and governance outcomes can be improved when citizens are actively involved in decision-making and policy implementation (Batuo, 2015). In Nigeria, civil society organizations and citizen awareness campaigns play a vital role in promoting citizen participation and holding governments accountable (Ibhagui, 2016).

Lastly, the rule of law is crucial for political integrity and governance outcomes. It ensures that all individuals, including politicians and public officials, are subject to the law and treated equally. The theoretical framework emphasizes that strengthening the rule of law helps prevent corruption, ensure fairness, and promote political integrity (Shabbir & Anwar, 2021). In Nigeria, judicial reforms and the establishment of anti-corruption institutions were efforts to improve the rule of law (Igbuzor, 2014).

In a nutshell, the theoretical framework for political integrity and governance outcomes in Nigeria suggests that accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law are crucial elements for enhancing political integrity and improving governance in the country. These factors work together to combat corruption, hold public officials accountable, promote citizen participation, and ensure fair treatment under the law.

III. Materials and Methods

This study utilized a secondary method of data collection, data were sourced from journal articles, newspapers, the Transparency International website, governmental reports, World Bank reports, etc. The collected data were analyzed with content analysis.

Analysis and Discussion

Few cases in Nigeria where political integrity impacted governance outcomes:

The Goodluck Jonathan Administration: During the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), political integrity played a substantial role in shaping governance outcomes. The administration made concerted efforts to improve transparency and accountability through initiatives such as the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA). These measures helped to curtail corruption, improve public financial management, and strengthen governance outcomes.

The Buhari Administration and the Anti-corruption Campaign: Since the assumption of office in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari's administration has strongly pursued an anti-corruption campaign. Efforts such as the recovery of stolen assets, trial of corrupt individuals, and institutional reforms have aimed to reinstate political integrity and improve governance outcomes. The campaign has resulted in the



convictions of high-profile individuals, increased transparency, and demonstrated the impact of political integrity on governance in Nigeria.

The Edo State Gubernatorial Elections (2020):

The gubernatorial elections in Edo State in 2020 illustrate how political integrity impacted governance outcomes at the subnational level. The incumbent governor, Godwin Obaseki, left his former political party and joined another party to pursue re-election. His decision was based on his commitment to good governance and political integrity. Obaseki's victory in the election proved that voters can reward leaders who prioritize political integrity, leading to improved governance outcomes.

The case of Akinwunmi Ambode and infrastructure development: Akinwunmi Ambode, as the former governor of Lagos State, implemented various infrastructure development projects that showcased the importance of political integrity in governance outcomes. His administration's commitment to ensuring that public funds were used effectively and transparently resulted in significant infrastructure improvements, contributing to improved governance outcomes in the state.

The Not-Too-Young-to-Run Law: The passage and implementation of the Not-Too-Young-to-Run law in 2018 is another case where political integrity influenced governance outcomes. The law reduced the age limit for running for political office, allowing young people to participate actively in the political process. By promoting inclusivity and giving opportunities to the younger generation, the law was intended to improve governance outcomes by bringing fresh perspectives and ideas into political leadership.

The case of Nuhu Ribadu and the EFCC: Nuhu Ribadu played a vital role in curbing corruption and improving governance outcomes. As the former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria. His efforts to investigate and prosecute corrupt individuals demonstrated the impact of political integrity on governance.

These above cases demonstrated how political integrity impacted governance outcomes in Nigeria at various levels, from the national to the subnational and even individual electoral processes.

Challenges of Political Integrity and Governance Outcomes in Nigeria

Political integrity and good governance are vital factors in ensuring stable and prosperous nations. In the case of Nigeria, understanding the relationship between political integrity and governance outcomes is crucial for comprehending the country's development trajectory. One of the fundamental challenges facing Nigeria's political integrity is corruption. Corruption undermines governance by diverting public resources, distorting policy-making processes, and eroding public trust in institutions. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Nigeria has consistently ranked poorly, indicating widespread corruption within the country (Transparency International, 2021).

The persistent nature of corruption in Nigeria has led to a variety of negative governance outcomes. Mismanagement of resources and embezzlement have stalled infrastructure development, healthcare provision, and education, perpetuating socio-economic inequalities (World Bank, 2019). Additionally, corrupt practices have obstructed the functioning of public institutions, stifling economic growth, and daunting foreign investments (Onuoha, 2020).

Moreover, corruption in Nigeria has reduced public trust in the government, leading to declining citizen confidence in the democratic process. This lack of trust weakens social unity, aggravates ethnic and regional tensions, and fuels political instability (Eboh, 2019). The result is a governance deficit, where decisions are influenced by personal interests rather than the common good, hindering the country's development prospects..

Electoral irregularities: The country has historically faced challenges with free and fair elections, including voter intimidation, ballot rigging, and violence. These challenges have undermined democratic governance and public trust in the political system.

Weak institutions: Nigeria has struggled with weak institutions, such as ineffective checks and balances, limited rule of law enforcement, and a lack of autonomy for key government bodies, which has allowed for abuses of power and compromised governance outcomes.

Lack of Political Will: One of the major challenges is the lack of political will to implement and enforce measures that promote political integrity. Political actors may have vested interests in maintaining the status quo and may resist efforts to enhance transparency and accountability.



Inadequate Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:

The absence of robust legal and regulatory frameworks to address political corruption and promote integrity poses a significant challenge. Weak enforcement mechanisms, loopholes, and gaps in existing laws can undermine efforts to combat corruption and enhance political integrity.

Capacity and Resource Constraints: Insufficient capacities and resources can hinder the effective implementation of integrity measures. A lack of trained personnel, technical expertise, and financial resources can constrain efforts to promote political integrity and measure its impact.

Political Dynamics and Power Imbalances: In many contexts, political dynamics and power imbalances can impede efforts to promote political integrity. Those in positions of power may manipulate rules, undermine reforms, or evade accountability, hindering progress in enhancing political integrity.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's political integrity has a significant impact on governance outcomes. However, widespread corruption hampers development undermines public trust, and perpetuates social and economic inequalities. Thus, addressing these challenges through comprehensive anti-corruption measures, institutional reforms, civic engagement, and regional and international cooperation will contribute to improving governance outcomes and fostering a more flourishing and equitable Nigeria. Addressing these challenges requires all-inclusive measures which include:

1. **Strengthening Anti-Corruption Measures:** Establishing independent anti-corruption agencies with adequate powers and resources, enhancing transparency and accountability in public institutions, and prosecuting corrupt individuals to dissuade future malpractice.

2. **Institutional Reforms:** Implementing reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions through merit-based recruitment, professional training, and systems for monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.

3. **Improving Civic Engagement:** Promoting civic education and participation to foster an active citizenry that holds officials accountable, demands transparency, and actively participates in the democratic process.

4. **Boosting Regional and International**

Cooperation: Cooperation with regional and international partners to strengthen anti-corruption initiatives, support capacity-building efforts, and recover stolen assets, thus preventing corrupt officials from exploiting cross-border loopholes.

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