



DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA FOCUS ON EBONYI STATE (2015-2024)

UGADA, MARTIN ONWUDINJO (Ph.D.)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, CARITAS UNIVERSITY, AMORJI-NIKE, ENUGU

EMAIL: martinugada200@gmail.com

ANYIONU, SAMUEL CHUKWU (Ph.D.)

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING, CARITAS UNIVERSITY, AMORJI-NIKE, ENUGU

OPARA STELLA, CHIOMA, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, CARITAS UNIVERSITY, AMORJI-NIKE, ENUGU

ELLOM, OBINNA HILLARY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, CARITAS UNIVERSITY, AMORJI-NIKE, ENUGU

ABSTRACT

The study was on democratic governance and fight against corruption in Nigeria with a focus on Ebonyi State (2015-2024). The objective was to determine the extent to which democratic governance had influenced fight against corruption and reduction of crime in Ebonyi State. The population used for the study was 1,503 from which a sample size of 316 was determined using the Taro Yamane statistical formula. The descriptive survey research design was employed. Primary and secondary sources were resorted to in collection of data analysed by use of simple percentages, frequencies and mean scores while chi-square statistical tool for test of hypothesis. With chi-square value (6.05) > critical value (2.733), democratic governance has not significantly influenced fight against corruption in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The paper recommended that elections should be free and fair in Nigeria so that the right caliber of public officials are engaged to prudently manage public funds devoid of corrupt practices.

Keywords:

Democratic governance, corruption, free and fair elections, prudent management of public fund.

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1.1 Background to the Study

Democratic governance serves as the cornerstone of a nation's political system. Principles such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, and participation characterize that concept. It provides the framework for policy formulation, establishment of institutions, and allocation of resources. In the Nigerian context, the change from military rule to democratic government in 1999 was a remarkable turning point in the nation's political arena. The switch over to democracy introduced new found options for development and progress with resultant prosperity for Nigeria (Moghalu, 2020).

Crude oil production and sales have brought increased receipts and rise in Government expenditure. Notwithstanding the observed increased expenditure, the expected corresponding growth and development has not been witnessed. This has exposed the pervasive nature of bad governance in Nigeria (Jega, 2019). When issues such as inefficiency in public administration, policy inconsistency, lack of transparency and accountability, and corruption, insensitivity to citizen's rights, and being not responsive to public interest, begin to rear their ugly heads, then know that bad governance has set in. These factors come together to pull down the performance of the economy by destabilizing resources allocation and the entire business environment. This reduces public trust in institutions (OkonjoIweala, 2018).

Earl Deputy and Sarat, (2017) see corruption as the abuse of public office for personal gain. It may occur at any level of government, be it federal, state or local government, including the three arms of government, namely, legislature, executive and the judiciary. Corrupt practices occur in all aspects of life, both in public and private sector organization. Irrespective of where corruption occurs, it rains down adverse consequences on the lives and welfare of citizens by denying them access to basic social amenities (Earl Deputy and Sarat, 2017).

In the opinion of Duriji and Desta in Egberi and Madubueze (2019), corruption involves outright theft, abuse of public authority in the quest to acquire privileges, nepotism, acts of embezzlement, or other misappropriation of state property or funds. All these acts tantamount to a negation of the true principles of democratic governance which is participatory in nature. In his opinion, Yagboyaju (2018) asserts that when a public official uses his position of authority to acquire wealth, status or power at the expense of public interest, such an official has corruptly changed the moral or lawful course of events.

Despite the gospels and homilies preached by all administrations in Nigeria in support of democratic governance devoid of corruption, none has been able to deliver the dividends of democracy. They only carry out a crusade of democracy as a tool to gather votes. Unfortunately, after the elections, all these profane promises of democracy get tightly locked up in a box waiting for the next four years (Omolola, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The will of the people should amply be demonstrated through democratic governance by visible infrastructure development, economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and social welfare improvement. When these factors are lacking, governance goes to the doldrums. Investigations have shown that in spite of the so-called transition to democracy in Nigeria, governance challenges have continued to impede the nation's growth and economic development. Notwithstanding its abundant endowment in natural resources, Nigeria's journey towards economic advancement has been hampered by weak institutions, political instability, corruption, and security threats. (Adamaaghashi, Izuchukwu Prince, 2018).

Against this background, the researchers recognize the need to examine the extent to which democratic governance has influenced the fight against corruption in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

1.3 Objective of the Study

To determine to what extent democratic governance has influenced fight against corruption and reduction of crime in Ebonyi State.

1.4 Research Question

How has democratic governance influenced fight against corruption and reduction of crime in Ebonyi State.

1.5 Statement of Research Hypothesis

Democratic governance has not significantly influenced fight against corruption and reduction of crime in Ebonyi State.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study has both theoretical and empirical significance.

Theoretically, the study will be of much benefit to researchers including students, also journals and libraries many use the work for publication and display respectively. It will be an addition to existing work on the topic.

Empirically, practitioners of democratic governance and socio-economic development such as politicians, in the class of legislators, the executive, investors, international relations in regional and global affairs, and policy makers in the field of planning and economic development may find the results of the study useful. Equally, the judiciary should be guided by the outcome of the study. Overall, the significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy decisions, enhance investor confidence, contribute to academic knowledge, promote democratic consolidation, and influence the reduction of corruption and crime in Ebonyi State.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study concerns the unit, content, geographical location and period covered. The study is on democratic governance and fight against corruption in Nigeria. The area covered is Ebonyi State within the period 2015 to 2024.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Some of the critical limitations include security issues and respondent's reluctance to complete the questionnaire. These problems were respectively overcome by use of escorts and approaching the administrative heads of the institutions to appeal to their staff to understand that the exercise was purely academic.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Democratic Governance

It refers to a system of government characterized by principles such as popular sovereignty, rule of law, respect for human rights, free and fair elections, and accountability to the electorate.

Corruption: This refers to the abuse of office for personal gain. It often involves nepotism, favoritism, bribery or embezzlement.

Rule of Law

This concept refers to the principle that all individuals, government officials and institutions are subject to and accountable to law which is fairly and consistently applied.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

22.1 Governance

The concept of governance dates back many centuries at least back to 400 BCE. For a definition, governance defies one that is universally accepted, each definition varying according to varying institutions. This being the case, we look at some few definitions. World Governance Indicators (2023) see governance as customs, traditions as well as institutions with which nations exercise authority. It is a process that allows the selection, monitoring and replacement of governments so as to effectively formulate and implement policies that respect the state and citizen's rights and build institutions that enable economic and social interactions between them. For the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP (2019) governance is the exercise of authority economically, politically and administratively so as to manage the affairs of a country at all levels. It involves all those institutions, mechanisms and processes by which the interests of citizens and groups are articulated and their differences exercised. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2022) asserts that governance is the delivery of a promise with the aim of improving the quality of life of citizens, through political, social and economic provision of goods and services. This is the expectation of every citizen that the state has the responsibility to deliver. Governance also relates to capacity of government to encourage the achievement of individual satisfaction and prosperity. Put together, government may be considered as the "management, supply and delivery of public services to a nation" (Daniel, 2018).

2.1.2 Democratic Governance

Adibe (2018) informs that democratic governance is a process that enables institutions and representatives who are duly elected to make decisions and policies to reflect the will and interests of the people so that transparency, accountability and the rule of law are assured, and the human rights and inclusive participation of citizens are protected. Suberu (2019) on his part, sees democratic governance as a system in which political power comes only through free, fair and credible elations, and where emphasis is placed on "accountability, participation and protection of citizens' fundamental human rights guaranteed under a framework of constitutionalism and rule of law." Jega (2020) conceives democratic governance as allowing

popular participation through electoral integrity, and being responsive to the needs and aspiration of citizens in a responsible and accountable manner, underpinned by strong institutions that observe the rule of law. Osaghe (2021) asserts that democratic governance thrives within a framework of principles of participation, representation, accountability and rule of law, where emphasis is placed on the role of institutions that ensure equitable and effective service delivery and protection of rights of citizens.

2.1.3 Cost of Governance

The cost of governance refers to public funds expended on administrative processes. It is also called administrative expenditure. Adewole and Osabuohien (2017) broke down cost of governance into two parts, namely, recurrent administrative expenses, and capital administrative expenses. These are costs incurred while running the affairs of government. Similarly, Fluvian (2016) defines cost of governance as any expenditure made in establishing and maintaining government administrative structures. He compares cost of governance to the total administrative expenditure, which adds up to the total administrative expenditure in Nigeria. Drucker (2017) agrees that cost of governance refers to both recurrent and capital votes allocated in government budget for establishment and maintenance of government administrative structures which are really enormous in Africa. What is important, therefore, is to ensure that the provision of public goods and services are sufficiently and efficiently done.

Furthermore, Fluvain (2016) lays emphasis on the specific factors that influence the rise in cost of governance in Africa. First, he identified the issue of inflation. He observed that corrupt politicians usually inflate cost of public projects. Such politicians often gain power undemocratically and disregard people’s demands and needs. They pursue their selfish interest to the detriment of public interest. There is need for equity. Adewole and Osaabuohien (2017) also observe that the rising cost of governance in Nigeria is a price we necessarily have to pay for undue consideration for equity. The excess money stolen by corrupt public officials from inflated public projects has adversely affected development, since resources are scarce and should be optimally utilized. This can only be possible if the people enthrone democratic governance devoid of corrupt practices by public officials.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Democratic Governance (i) Rule of law (ii) Popular Sovereignty (iii) Citizens Participation	Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria (Ebonyi State)

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Two theories were used to substantiate the relationship between democratic governance and fight against corruption.

2.3.1 Agency Theory

Principal agent theory argues that the public (as principals) on whose behalf politicians and bureaucrats (as agents) are supposed to govern, are unable to hold the latter accountable because of insufficient information (information asymmetry) the incompleteness of the contracts of employment, and the problems of monitoring behavior (Wash 1995; Lane 1995). The public sector under-performs because state officials pursue their own narrow self-interests rather than the public interest. It is difficult to extract accountability and good performance from public servants (agents) because of the monopoly characteristics abilities and interest of public of public services, imperfect information about the services, and about the huge transaction costs monitor complete contracts. One solution to the problems of the public offices to democratic processes of selection/ election so as to curb their excesses in corrupt practices.

2.3.2 Public Finance Management Theory

This theory assumes that all aspects of financial resources mobilization and expenditure should be well managed in government for the benefit of the citizenry. It includes resources mobilization, prioritization of programmes, the budgeting process efficient management of resources and exercising control to guard against threats, (Effiong, Lorenzo, Godspower, et al, 2017).

2.4 Empirical Review

Adegbami and Adepoju (2017) in their assessment of good governance in areas of law, transparency, accountability and citizen's participation for national peace and development in Nigeria, applied the ex post facto design using secondary data only. The study discovered that unethical practices such as rule of the thumb, and brazen corruption on the part of public officials brought about bad governance with resultant, unemployment, underdevelopment and poverty. Allied to these ills are other social disorders like diseases, crimes, internal violence, insurgences, and loss of lives and properties. The paper concluded that with citizens' participation in decision making via democratic governance, peace, stability and development will reign.

Adakunle, Odutola, Akomolafe and Adegbite (2018) studied "reducing financial leakages through effective transparency and accountability mechanism: a necessary tool to accelerate sustainable economic development." Their focus was on the issue of underdevelopment resulting from financial leakages in development projects carried out by means of eliminating these financial leakages. The researchers reviewed relevant literature on public financial management. Secondary data, including bulltins of Federal Ministry of Finance, Central Bank of Nigeria, and National Bureau of Statistics were used for generation of data. Regression analysis of data was used through (SPSS) statistical package for social sciences. The study exposed that the strategies applied by the Buhari Administration to plug looting of the public treasury have significantly affected acceleration of economic development in Nigeria.

Nkwede et al (2023) writing on democracy and sustainable development in rural communities in Ebonyi State. Nigeria, assert that the inadequacies of socio-economic and infrastructural facilities in the rural communities continues to pose serious challenge to the various governments in the country (Ebonyi State inclusive). The availability of these socio-economic infrastructure would enable rural community dwellers have access to wide distribution of the benefits of economic growth, significant improvements in the incomes and assets of the poor which would improve the

effect of democracy as a bridge builder in the provision of sustainable development in the rural communities in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The study contends that development in the rural communities was a typical outcome of the application of democratic principles. It asserts that the practice of democracy is a determining factor in the sustainable development of rural communities. In Ebonyi State. The study posits that democracy is the type of government that can guarantee the right of citizens to improved income and assets and to a large extent improved standard of living devoid of corruption by public officials. The data for the study were collected from documentary sources, media commentaries, scholarly inputs and direct observations, while content analytical approach was framework of analysis. The study applied the system's theory as its framework of analysis. The study found out that the pervious undemocratic government's approach to rural development was not consistent, hence it has no significant impact on the lives of the rural community dwellers. The paper concluded that democracy influences reduction of corruption and remains a viable bridge-builder for community development in Ebonyi State.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design relying on primary sources of data collected first hand from original sources, and secondary data generated on second hand basis through the use of text books, seminars papers, journals, newspapers, internet and magazines from public and specialized libraries. The study used a population of 1,503 covering three selected MDAs in Ebonyi State, namely, Ministry of Information, Ebonyi State independent Electoral Commission and Ebonyi State Judiciary. Then using Taro Yamane statistical formula a Sample size of 316 was determined to whom copies of questionnaire were distributed. The researcher employed spots assistants to distribute and ensure maximum cooperation of respondents. A total of 298 copies of the questionnaire were returned within one week. Analysis was done using percentages, frequencies and the critical values of the chi-square distribution with degree of freedom.

Data presentation

How has democratic governance influenced fight against corruption in Ebonyi State?

S/N	STATEMENT	RESPONSE					
		SA	A	UN	D	SD	TOTAL
1.	Rule of law, popular sovereignty and transparent elections are not necessary ingredients for socio-economic development.	0	0	25	53	220	298
2.	Corruption and crime do not affect socio-economic development.	81	5	45	50	127	298
3.	Candidates for elections in Ebonyi State do not grab snatch and run away with votes.	93	2	14	91	98	298
4.	Ebonyi State government officials do not engage in corrupt practices.	11	19	12	15	241	298
5.	Ebonyi State government officials do not oppose corrupt practices.	34	11	21	34	198	298

Source: Field Survey

Hypothesis

Democratic governance has significantly influenced fight against corruption in Ebonyi State.

OBSERVED FREQUENCY TABLE

OPTION	MOI	EBSIEC	JUDICIARY	TOTAL
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	0	0
Undecided	13	5	7	25
Disagree	30	5	18	53
Strongly Disagree	120	30	70	220
	163	42	94	298

4.3.2(b) EXPECTED FREQUENCY TABLE

$$\frac{220 \times 163}{298} = 120.34$$

$$\frac{220 \times 40}{298} = 29.53$$

$$\frac{220 \times 95}{298} = 70.13$$

$$\frac{53 \times 163}{298} = 29.99$$

$$\frac{53 \times 40}{298} = 7.11$$

$$\frac{53 \times 95}{298} = 16.9$$

$$\frac{25 \times 163}{298} = 13.67$$

$$\frac{25 \times 40}{298} = 3.36$$

$$\frac{25 \times 95}{298} = 7.97$$

$$\frac{0 \times 163}{298} = 0$$

$$\frac{0 \times 40}{298} = 0$$

$$\frac{0 \times 95}{298} = 0$$

$$\frac{0 \times 163}{298} = 0$$

$$\frac{0 \times 40}{298} = 0$$

$$\frac{298}{298} = 0$$

4.3.2(c) Distribution Table for Computation of Chi-Square

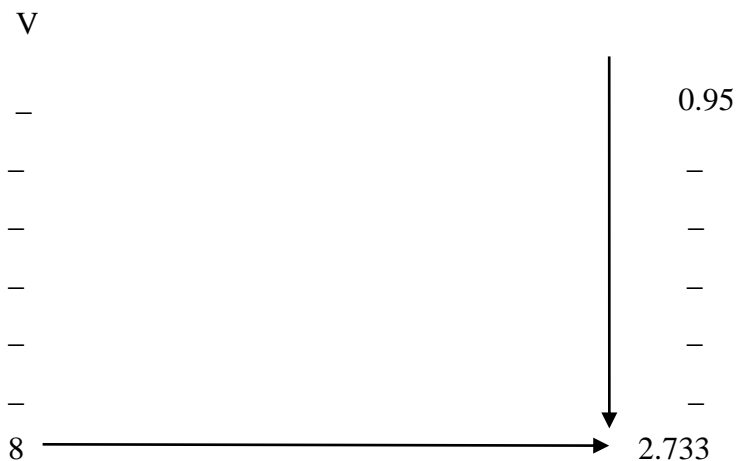
Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
120	120	0	0	0
30	30	0	0	0
70	70	0	0	0
30	21	9	81	3.9
5	7	-2	4	0.57
18	17	1	1	0.05
13	14	-1	1	0.07
5	3	2	4	1.33
7	8	-1	1	0.13
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
				6.05

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Contribution of Hypothesis

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Degree of Freedom (df)} &= (R-1)(C-1) \\ &= (5-1)(3-1) \\ &= (4)(2) \\ &= 8 \end{aligned}$$

Critical value, $V = 1 - 0.05 = 0.95$



4.3.2(d) Discussion of Result of Hypothesis

Decision Rule for Applying chi-square

If the calculated chi-square is greater than the given critical value, reject the stated hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Result of Hypothesis

Since the chi-square value (6.05) is greater than the critical value (2.733), the stated hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis which states that democratic governance has not significantly influenced fight against corruption and reduction of crime in Ebonyi state, is accepted. Sanders (2017), believe that corruption has a negative effect on economic growth because it increases the transaction cost and the production cost. Most importantly, corruption will decrease the consumer confidence and investor confidence and degenerate the trust of the overall institutional quality of the particular society. Sander's assertion goes a long way in explaining how and why corruption of public officials, who are expected to be drivers of democratic governance, has adversely influenced socio-economic development.

5.1 Conclusion

The study observes that democratic governance is a sine qua non for sustainable development. Despite all efforts made by various Administrations in Nigeria to reduce corruption in the public sector, not much appears to have been achieved in that direction. The paper concluded that with citizens' participation in decision making via democratic governance, peace, stability and development will reign.

5.2 Summary of Finding

With chi-square value of (6.05) > critical value (2.733), democratic governance has not significantly influenced fight against corruption in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

5.3 Recommendation

Elections should be free and fair so that the right caliber of public officials are engaged to prudently manage public funds devoid of corrupt practices.

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