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AN ASSESSMENT OF ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY OF EFCC UNDER BUHARI ADMINISTRATION: FROM 2015-2019.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the anti-corruption strategy of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) under the Buhari administration from 2015-2019. Corruption is one of the common social evils that spreads widely in Nigeria. It's a criminal offence and the subject has received a fair share of legislative time and attention, considering the number of substantive laws that have been enacted on it by the National Assembly in Nigeria. With the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), corrupt practices both in the public and private sectors appear to be on the increase and it seems difficult for anti-graft agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to succeed in prosecute many of the alleged corruption cases involving billions of Naira by government functionaries, contractors, as well as private individuals and organizations. Despite the EFCC's efforts to combat corruption, the country continues to grapple with widespread corruption, with many high-profile cases remaining unprosecuted. The Fourth Republic began in 1999, the major governance and development issue inherited by the new democratic administration was that of corruption. Consequently, majority of Nigerians will readily blame corruption as the greatest enemy hindering the country's development. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) make use of so many strategies in combating corruption such as whistle blowing, freezing of accounts, among others. This study examines the effectiveness of the EFCC anti-corruption strategies and the challenges facing the EFCC, including executive control, lack of independence, and inadequate resources. The study also assesses the impact of corruption on Nigeria's development and the role of the EFCC in addressing this menace.

Keywords: Corruption, Crime, Democracy, Development, Economy, Finance

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INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a global problem considered inimical to governance and development as it cripples the service delivery capacities of governments by diverting public resources into private uses (Oladeji, Olasupo and Ijeoma, 2018). Once allowed in a system, corruption speedily permeates the system and destroys its systemic essence and existence (Akindele, 2005). According to Eugene (2013), corruption has really affected all nations across the globe especially the developing states in Africa, Nigeria included. While corruption is certainly a universal problem and no state, irrespective of socio-economic and political advancement and or sophistication of security networks, is sufficiently immune to its specters, it remains a major governance and development problem in Nigeria (Oladeji, Olasupo and Ijeoma, 2018). For example, with the discovery and exploration of oil fields and huge petrodollars accruing to the country annually, Nigeria was poised to become Africa's response to the 'Asian Tigers' in terms of rapid development (Ayittey, 2006). The politico-military dinosaurs, tyrants and tropical gangsters crippled and reduced the 'giant of Africa' to a comatose midget

(Ayittey, 2006; Osaghae, 1998; Oladeji, *et al.*, 2018). Corruption as a global problem, in view of Ogunbunmi and Adefabi (2024) The development and operation of vital sectors are severely hampered by corruption, a widespread problem in many societies. Corrupt practices have had a significant impact on Nigeria's educational system, which has had a negative impact on students, teachers, and the future of the country.

Consequently, over the years, corruption has become one of Nigeria's biggest challenges. Indeed, due to pervasive plundering of the commonwealth by the political class and their hangers-on, Nigeria, despite its 'enormous potential' for greatness, has been trapped in the pond of grinding poverty, hunger, political strives, incurable diseases, and evergreen debts (Oladeji, *et al.*, 2018). Oladeji, *et al.* (2018) argue further that over the post-independence period, corruption has grown in leaps and bounds and created a very tiny class of 'sudden billionaires' and huge bank accounts for political jobbers entrepreneurs at the expense of the critical mass of the population, who wallow in poverty, hunger, and impoverishment. With about 86.9 million people living in severe poverty, which is about 50% of its entire population, 'Nigeria is

known as the poverty capital of the world' (Adebayo, 2018). As an entrenched phenomenon, corruption affects every sector and institution of state in Nigeria. Consequently, Nigeria, which is the most populous country in Africa, has consistently been ranked by the Transparency International (TI) in the league of the most corrupt nations in the world. The consequence of this is not only felt within the country, but it also impacts on the image of the country within the international community. For example, it is common for Nigerians in other countries to be perceived as corrupt. As noted earlier, corruption is a key threat to good governance, democracy processes and fair business competition (OECD, 2011). Accountability, trust in government and integrity in public life are high on the global agenda³, fuelled by the growing acceptance that state exit to serve their citizens and a revolution in technology that put information in the public domain. According to Jayeoba (2011), global corruption is regarded as public evil and a bane of development, especially in the third world nations. In essence, there has been global intensification of efforts to encourage transparency and accountability so as to ensure the use of

public resources for the common good of the society.

While it is almost admissible that corruption is the worst enemy of development in Nigeria, given the convoluted means of enacting corruption, it is also almost impossible to estimate the amount of money Nigeria has lost to corruption. Despite this difficulty, *The Economist* (October 21, 2006) puts the figure at around \$400 billion. Indeed, the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari claims to have recovered a whopping N3.4 trillion in cash and assets from treasury looters (Nnabugwu, 2016). In the same vein, it may not be easy to measure with accuracy the actual impact of corruption on governance and economy. Notwithstanding this difficulty, a Price waterhouse Coopers (PWC) recent study estimates that Nigeria must have lost to corruption about \$130 billion in GDP (PWC, 2016: 14-16). The PWC's findings are not too dissimilar to an earlier investigation, which reported that corruption seriously affects "the potential growth ability of Nigeria to the extent that over \$100 billion in GDP is lost" (Ibraheem, Umar and Ajoke, 2013:54).

Thus, when the Fourth Republic began in 1999, the major governance and development issue inherited by the new democratic administration was that of corruption (Oladeji, *et al.*, 2018). Consequently, majority of Nigerians will readily blame corruption as the greatest enemy hindering the country's development. Obasanjo sees corruption as business as usual with graft, and he took some commendable strong-minded steps. According to Amaraegbu (2016: 228), the anticorruption posture of Obasanjo was motivated by a combination of several factors. First, his empowerment as Nigeria's civilian President was a significant political development whereby he could affect or be affected by Nigeria's actions, objectives and policies. Second, there was the brigandage and rapacious looting that characterized successive military regimes including the 'Abacha loot' stashed away in foreign bank accounts. Third, there was the need to redeem Nigeria's image from its awful status as the home of corruption, Fourth, Transparency International (TI) continued to consistently rank Nigeria in the league of the most corrupt nations in the world (Amaraegbu, 2016).

In the light of the foregoing, Obasanjo's government put in place some agencies aimed

at stemming the tide of corruption in Nigeria. For instance, when President Olusegun Obasanjo assumed office in May 29 1999, he declared a 'total war' against corruption and said it would be 'business unusual' with graft. To show his readiness to fight corruption, the first bill he sent to the National Assembly proposed the establishment of an anti-graft body, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). Also, in its efforts to rid Nigeria of financial crimes, the administration equally established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2002.

EFFCC began full operation in 2003 with support from the Presidency, the legislature, security and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. The primary duties of the commission are to eradicate all economic and financial crimes such as: advanced fee fraud, money laundering, future market fraud, fraudulent encashment of negotiable instruments, computer credit card fraud, contracts scam, and embezzlement of public funds among others. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is a sister body to other bodies in the fight of corruption in Nigeria. It has huge, extensive and expansive anti-corruption functions and

jurisdictions. These functions, no doubt, are fundamentally limited to purely financial and economic crimes as defined in its Act and it involves investigating and charging perpetrators of such crimes to court for prosecution.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) make use of so many strategies in combating corruption such as freezing of accounts, fraud prevention also known as scam and safety information and penal. Frozen account has been identified as the mitigation mechanism to investigate corruption cases. Forensic accounting originated as a response to the growing and increased rate of corruption and corrupt practices globally (Popoola, 2014; Kasum, 2009) if EFCC. Another strategy used by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) is fraud prevention strategy it also known Scam and Safety Information, it is an illusion for anyone to believe that it is impossible to fall victim of fraud. Conventional wisdom recommends that we be on guard always as scammers everywhere are incredibly deceptive and can ensnare even the most intelligent amongst us. The last strategy is penal. It is seen as relating to, or being a penalty or punishment, especially for a

crime”. Hence one can deduce from the meaning of the word “penal” that penal strategy is the means of regulating crime in a given society. The penal strategy spells out conducts which are prohibited, the penalty for breach, the procedure for determining the guilt of those who violate the rules and adjudication of appropriate punishment.

By the time President Buhari took the reign of office on May 29, 2015, corruption had not only been entrenched in government circles, but had also become part of the socio-economic culture in Nigeria (Oladeji, *et al.*, 2018). Consequently, when President Buhari assumed office in 2015, he remarked that the major policy focus of his administration was ‘anti-corruption war’, Buhari focused on the anti-corruption war by re-jigging the headships of key Federal Government’s anti-corruption agencies or bodies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); Department of State Security (DSS) and International Corrupt Practices omission (ICPC). The activities of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the operation of EFCC has become increasingly complicated as a result of the corrupt practice fused in the system (Ethelbert, 2016). Also series of corruption related activities have

been recorded since the inception of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Ekpo, Chime & Enor, 2016). In view of Balogun (2016) there are audience of pervasive corruption in the numerous patterns of their administration of criminal justice in Nigeria which stem from fraud offenders or victims explaining how EFCC operatives demand bribes and large cut to how their operations are guided by political motivation which shows the extent corruption has infested the judicial administration of justice of Nigeria's apex corruption fighting body (Agbaje, 2012). According to Abdullai (2024) in his view said that there is no transparency and clear system for managing recovered funds. Possibility of re-looting is high since the recovered asset are said to be plough back to the system. However, the important point to note is that, the administration took a commendable step by investigating, prosecuting and eventually convicting some public officers found wanting.

Furthermore, to check the widespread of corruption and abuse of the procurement process in the public procurement and service delivery, in June 2003, the government established the Budget Monitoring and Price

Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), also known as Due Process (Amaraegebu, 2016: 231). Similarly, to help engender and promote transparency and due process in the country's extractive industry, in 2004 the government established the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI). A major goal of NEITI was to eliminate all forms of corrupt practices in the determination, payments, receipts and posting of revenue accruing to the federal government from the extractive industry companies (NEITI, 2006). Furthermore, the government signed international anti-corruption instruments like the UN conventions, African Union (AU) conventions and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocols on corruption (Amaraegebu, 2016). The focus of this study, therefore, is the assessment of anti-corruption strategies of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) under President Buhari administration from 2015 and 2019.

Research Questions

The study shall focus on the following questions:

What are the strategies Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) employed in the fight of corruption under Buhari administration in Nigeria? To what extent has the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) reduced the level of corruption under Buhari administration in Nigeria? What are the challenges encountered by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) strategies in fighting corruption.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Concept of corruption

According to Transparency International (2003), corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit. Corruption, according to the Sierra Leone's National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2005), can be in the form of theft or illegitimate acquisition of state or public assets through the misuse of power, such as spontaneous privatization of public enterprise, equipment, financial sources, uncontrolled utilization of funds,

obtaining credit without payments, payments of wages to an un-exiting employees etc. Kofi (2003) sees corruption as an insidious plague that has a wide range of effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish. According Larry (2001), corruption is the predator to the state what the blood supply is to a malignant tumor. Cut it off and the tumor will shrink and die.

Rotimi, Obasaju, Lawal and Ise (2013) defined corruption as an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private- regarding - motive such as wealth, power or status. From the foregoing, corruption can be viewed as deviation from normal standard operating procedure or rules or norms of a company, an organisation, government agencies or parastatal for personal or relative gain. Corruption is a hotchpotch of deceit, concealment, betrayal of trust, abuse of office, and misuse of public power for personal benefit. Corruption is a complex phenomenon with polygonal causes and

multidimensional effects on many nations around the World. Such effects include; economic and political underdevelopment as well as cultural and moral trophy. Khan (1996) defines corruption as “an act which deviates from formal rules of conduct governing the action of someone in a position of public authority”. In a broader sense, Ekiyor (2005) defines corruption as unlawful use of official power or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and any other person at the expense of the public, in contravention of his oath and contrary to conventions and laws that are in force.

Anti-Corruption

Anti-corruption beyond the law, sit (anticorruption) comprise activities that oppose or inhibit corruption. Just as corruption takes many forms, anti -Corruption efforts vary in scope and in strategy. A general distinction between preventive and reactive measures is sometimes drawn. Anti-corruption (anticorruption) comprises activities that oppose or inhibit corruption. Just as corruption takes many forms, anti-corruption efforts vary in scope and in strategy.

Regulatory compliance: Instead of relying purely on deterrence, as suggested by Robert Klitgaard economists are pursuing the implementation of incentive structures that reward compliance and punish the non-fulfillment of compliance rules. By aligning the self-interest of the agent with the societal interest of avoiding corruption, a reduction in corruption can thus be achieved. The field of compliance can generally be perceived as an internalization of external laws in order to avoid their fines. The adoption of laws like the FCPA and the UK Bribery Act of 2010 strengthened the importance of concepts like compliance, as fines for corrupt behavior became more likely and there was a financial increase on these fines. When a company is sued because its employers engaged in corruption, a well-established compliance system can serve as proof that the organization attempted to avoid those acts of corruption. Accordingly, fines can be reduced and this incentivizes the implementation of an efficient compliance system. In 2012, the US-authorities decided not to prosecute Morgan Stanley in a case of bribery in China under FCPA-provisions due to its compliance program. This case demonstrates the relevance of the compliance approach.

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Collective action Anti-corruption collective action is a form of collective action with the aim of combating corruption and bribery risks in public procurement. It is a collaborative anti-corruption activity that brings together representatives of the private sector, public sector and civil society. The idea stems from the academic analysis of the prisoner's dilemma in game theory and focuses on establishing rule-abiding practices that benefit every stakeholder, even if unilaterally each stakeholder might have an incentive to circumvent the specific anti-corruption rules. Transparency International first floated a predecessor to modern collective action initiatives in the 1990s with its concept of the Island of Integrity, now known as an integrity pact. According to Transparency International, "collective action is necessary where a problem cannot be solved by individual actors" and therefore requires stakeholders to build trust and share information and resources. The World Bank Institute states that collective action "increases the impact and credibility of individual action, brings vulnerable individual players into an alliance of like-minded organizations and levels the playing field between competitors. Anti-corruption

collective action initiatives are varied in type, purpose and stakeholders but are usually targeted at the supply side of bribery. They often take the form of collectively agreed anti-corruption declarations or standard-setting initiatives such as an industry code of conduct. A prominent example is the Wolfsberg Group and in particular its Anti-Money Laundering Principles for Private Banking and Anti-Corruption Guidance, requiring the member banks to adhere to several principles directed against money laundering and corruption. The mechanism is designed to protect individual banks from any negative consequences of complying with the strict rules by collectively enforcing those regulations. The Wolfsberg Group in addition serves as a back-channel for communication between the compliance officers of the participating banks. The World Economic Forum's initiatives against corruption can also be seen in this framework. Other initiatives in the field of collective action include the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Construction Sector Transparency Initiative/ Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST) and International Forum on Business Ethical Conduct (IFBEC). Collective action is included in the national

anti-corruption statements of the UK, France, and Ghana.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rational Choice Theory

This study adopts rational choice theory of corruption as explicated by Kendra Dupuy in his functionalist and rational choice theories of corruption. For the purpose of this paper, I shall limit the framework to rational choice theory of corruption. Rational choice theory is rooted in methodological individualism; it models human behaviour as the result of individual, self-interested preferences (Hall and Taylor 1996; Elster 1989). People are calculative and strategic, and they carefully weigh the costs and benefits of certain actions before undertaking them. Moreover, individuals have fixed, well-defined, ranked, and consistent preferences, and they behave instrumentally to achieve those preferences. The ultimate goal for individuals is to maximize utility: to attain whatever goal makes them happier, more satisfied, or better off, such as power or money. The major philosopher of rational choice theory is Adam Smith. In his essay “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,”

from 1776, proposed human nature’s tendency toward self-interest resulted in prosperity. Smith’s term “the invisible hand” referred to unseen forces driving the free market. Smith used the work of philosopher Thomas Hobbes’ “Leviathan” (1651) to influence his own work. In “Leviathan,” Hobbes explained that political institution functioning was a result of individual choices. Philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli, who wrote “The Prince” in 1513, also introduced ideas related to rational choice theory in his treatise. Moving from economics to the social sciences, in the 1950s and 1960s, sociologists George C. Homans, Peter Blau and James Coleman promoted rational choice theory in relation to social exchange. These social theorists stated that a rational calculation of an exchange of costs and rewards drives social behavior.

Rational choice theory as a framework of analysis is individual centered on the side of self-interested preferences (Hall and Taylor 1996; Elster 1989). Individual choices largely depend on the social context, in which corruption control, policies are much more necessary than judicial processes. It is evident, therefore, that individual conduct cannot be entirely disregarded. On the other

hand, it is essential to consider that, in many situations, institutional conditions also play a significant role alongside individual behavior (Mungiu-Pipidi 2024).

The presupposition is that people are calculative and strategic. Moreover, they carefully weigh options as well as the costs and benefits of certain actions before undertaking them. Moreover, individuals have fixed, well-defined, ranked, and consistent preferences, and they behave instrumentally to achieve those preferences. The ultimate goal for individuals is to maximize utility: to attain whatever goal makes them happier, more satisfied, or better off, such as power or money. This is based on the fact that corruption is a choice that is basically in the interest of the perpetrator(s).

There are three essential components of rational choice theory as a framework for analyzing corruption. It could be in form of any of the following. The first is collective action approach. The second is principal agent approach. The third is coordination game approach. In the first instance above, corruption may be a particular type of collective action problem, wherein individuals have incentives to pursue their

own self-interest, rather than work with others towards the collective good. This has been called “social dilemma” (Köbis et al, 2016). In the second case, corruption may equally be a principal-agent problem. This is a function of organizing cooperative behaviour, which often requires delegation of responsibility for tasks both to and within formal institutions and organizations. Principals (i.e. citizens) delegate power to agents such as bureaucrats to act on their behalf, for instance to produce certain public goods. There are situations in which agents are more likely to act in ways that maximize their own interests rather to the detriment of those of the principal, most especially when the principal is not in the position to fully monitor the agent’s behavior (Klitgaard 1998; Rose-Ackerman 1978).

The third variant takes the following form. Corruption can also be perceived as a different type of collection action problem, a coordination problem, the function of prevailing norms. Corruption may be systemic and widespread not because the institutions that constrain unethical behaviour are weak, but rather because of the existence of pro-corruption social norms (Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013). The following assumptions are made on individual action

and corruption; All actions are rational and are made due to considering costs and rewards, the reward of a relationship or action must outweigh the cost for the action to be completed. So when the value of the reward diminishes below the value of the costs incurred, the person will stop the action or end the relationship. Individuals will use the resources at their disposal to optimize their rewards. Rational choice theory expresses that individuals are in control of their decisions or actions. Choices are not made because of unconscious drives, tradition or environmental influences. They use rational considerations to weigh consequences and potential benefits. Looking at the Nigerian situation, this framework of analysis appears appropriate in the examination of corruption and anti-corruption under President Buhari, 2015 to 2019.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

Rational choice theory is helpful in understanding individual and collective behaviors. It helps to pinpoint why people, groups and society as a whole move toward certain choices, based on specific costs and rewards. It also helps to explain seemingly

“irrational” behavior. Rational choice theory can promote inquiry and understanding, helping differing parties, like a client and a therapist, to recognize the other’s rationale.

Rational choice theory also have shortcomings such as; it focuses on individual action, in which individual action drives large social structures, some rational choice theory critics argue the theory is too limited in its explanation. Another weakness of rational choice theory is that it doesn’t account for intuitive reasoning or instinct. For decisions that must be made in an instant, such as decisions that influence survival, there may not be time to weigh the costs and benefits.

RESEARCH METHOD

This consists of various procedures adopted in gathering data for the study. It thus contains, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, validity of the study, reliability of the study, administration of the instrument and data analysis. The study will adopt quantitative and qualitative research design. Data will be obtained through both primary and secondary sources. The primary source shall covers questionnaire, interviews of officials of the

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the selection of respondents will be based on both simple random and purposive sampling methods. Secondary sources of data for this study shall be gathered from government and international agencies' publications, such as anti-corruption act, government gazette, bulletins, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), journals, newspapers, magazines, extracts from court judgments and rulings, internet materials and relevant text.

FROZEN ACCOUNT AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

According to Crumbley, Heitger and Smith (2009) opined that forensic accounting is the action of identifying, recording, settling, extracting, sorting, reporting and verifying past financial data or other accounting activities, for settling current or prospective legal disputes, or using such past financial data for projecting future financial data to settle legal disputes. It utilizes accounting, auditing and investigative skills when conducting any kind of investigation. Equally critical is the ability to respond immediately and to communicate financial information clearly and concisely in a courtroom setting.

Penal and Anti-corruption

According to Black's law Dictionary, 9th edition defined penal as or relating to, or being a penalty or punishment, especially for a crime". Hence one can deduce from the meaning of the word "penal" that penal technique is the means of regulating crime in a given society. The penal technique spells out conducts which are prohibited, the penalty for breach, the procedure for determining the guilt of those who violate the rules and adjudication of appropriate punishment.

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission Act, Money Laundering Act, Anti-Corruption Act, Advance Fee Fraud and other related offences Act, and so on, are laws put in place to prohibit Crime Commission and sanction offenders in Nigeria. For instance Section 419A of the Criminal Code Act establishes that "Obtaining Credit by false pretenses or other fraud" is a crime in Nigeria, meanwhile its Subsection 1b provides that punishment for such a crime is imprisonment for three years. As a permanent feature of a responsible government, it is entitled to Crime Prevention, which is the attempt to deter crime and criminals, more so to discourage deviant behaviours in the

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society so as to ensure a safe living for the people of such a society. No doubt, in Nigeria the Penal technique is the accentuated means of curbing and correcting deviance, to what extent it has reduced the commission of incessant Crimes and particularly Cyber Crime in Nigeria is the consciousness behind this protest.

Tracing down to the year 2017, the war against Cyber Crime wore a new dress. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) inherited the in genuine fight against Cyber Criminals from a section of Nigerian Police known as Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The Commission began the strict arrest and prosecution of people suspected to be internet fraudsters, hence a background survey reveals that this year, the agency has already made arrest of not less than 250 alleged internet fraudsters and has secured the conviction of about 50 of them. Although this is a laudable attempt indeed, to put an end to Cyber Crime business that is fast rising in Nigeria and its West African Cronies, but I dare say that the fight against this particular crime is beyond court and jail.

Fraud Prevention or Scam and Safety Information and Anti-corruption

Fraud prevention is also known as scam and safety Information. It is an illusion for anyone to believe that it is impossible to fall victim of fraud. Conventional wisdom recommends that we be on guard always as scammers everywhere are incredibly deceptive and can ensnare even the most intelligent amongst us. They operate with guile and strike when you least expects. The most educated and the high net worth as well as the most impoverish members of the society have been victim at one time or the others.

Below is the corruption cases worked on by the EFCC in Nigeria between 2015-2019

| Year | Cases Investigated | Cases Prosecuted | Conviction |
|------|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| 2015 | 117 | 13 | 13 |
| 2016 | 195 | 36 | 13 |
| 2017 | 186 | 93 | 68 |
| 2018 | 603 | 312 | 103 |
| 2019 | 890 | 809 | 103 |

Source: Researcher Field work 2025

CASES INVESTIGATED

In 2015, the number of cases investigated was 117 and increased to 195 in 2016. The number dropped by 9 in 2017, which made the cases investigated that year 186. However,

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in 2018 and 2019, there was a massive increase in the number of corruption cases investigated, 603 and 890 cases respectively, compared to 2015 when the fight against corruption started. The table below shows the data graphically.

CASES INVESTIGATED

In 2015, the number of cases investigated was 117 and increased to 195 in 2016. The number dropped by 9 in 2017, which made the cases investigated that year 186. However, in 2018 and 2019, there was a massive increase in the number of corruption cases investigated, 603 and 890 cases respectively, compared to 2015 when the fight against corruption started.

CASES PROSECUTED

Several cases were prosecuted by the EFCC between 2015 and 2019. In 2015, just 13 cases were prosecuted and a slight increase to 36 in 2016. The number increased to 93 in 2017. By 2018, the number of persecuted corruption cases drastically increased to 312 from 96. 2019 showed a great turnout in the number of cases prosecuted, it blew from 312 to 603.

CASES CONVICTED

EFCC has worked hard in tackling corruption in Nigeria, making use of different anti-corruption strategies. Sadly, the numbers of corruption cases that were convicted are significantly low compared to the high numbers of persecuted cases. In 2015 and 2016, just 13 people were convicted. It increased to 68 in 2017. 103 people were convicted in 2018 and 103 in 2019. In conclusion, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) investigated a total of 1,991 corruption cases. 1,057 corruption cases were prosecuted in total and 300 out of the prosecuted corruption cases were convicted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The EFCC's anti-corruption strategy under the Buhari administration from 2015-2019 has faced significant challenges, including inadequate resources, executive control, and lack of independence. Despite these challenges, the EFCC has made efforts to combat corruption, with some notable successes. However, the persistence of widespread corruption in Nigeria underscores the need for more effective anti-corruption strategies. The EFCC should be granted greater independence from executive control

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to enable it to effectively investigate and prosecute corruption cases.

Nigeria's anti-corruption laws should be strengthened to provide more effective tools for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. The EFCC should be provided with adequate funding to enable it to effectively carry out its mandate. In addition specialized courts should be established to try corruption cases, with specialized judges and prosecutors trained to handle such cases.

Also the Nigeria Foreign policies should include International cooperation in prosecution corruption personnel, the EFCC should strengthen international cooperation with other anti-corruption agencies to combat cross-border corruption. It's also recommend that the EFCC should engage in public awareness campaigns to educate Nigerians on the dangers of corruption and encourage public participation in anti-corruption efforts. In conclusion, in other to reduce corruption in Nigeria and to make the EFCC effective in their fight against corruption, the whistle-blowers should be provided with adequate protection and incentives to encourage them to report corruption cases.

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