

Impact of Human Character and Information System on Corruption Risk in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Different strategies have been deployed to fight corruption such as e-governance, big-data and open-data, block chain technology, anti-corruption policy on conflict of interest rules, asset declaration, and so on. A pertinent question is, can these strategies count much when there are doubts in human inherent character? Addressing human character first would mean that the preceding research findings on anti corruption practices would be driven by cultured and good character oriented administrative personnel which in turn would address corruption risk and poverty. Hence, the research investigated the impacts of human character as a primary factor on corruption free governance and the use of information system for determining, based on human character, whether a candidate for any administrative position is a corruption risk before being elected or appointed. Questionnaires were used for collecting data. After the analysis of the data using SPSS, the paper revealed that using human character as the first check to mitigate corruption risk via information system positively impacted on corruption free governance.

Keywords — Human character, Information system, Corruption, Election, Appointment, Poverty.

I. INTRODUCTION

Good number of anti-corruption measures has been adopted in different parts of the world. For instance, e-government which is the use of information and communication technology to enhance access to, and delivery of government services for the benefit of all citizens utilized in Nigeria has contributed in reducing corruption. However, one of the challenges of e-governance is content management by government and organizations. Ministries and parastatals websites are sometimes dead zones with outdated information to satisfy the need of the moment [1].

Big data and open data can help uncover, prevent and deter corruption. Examples abound of citizen-friendly open data tools such as New York's "Checkbook NYC 2.0" to open up the city budget, Colombia's "Maparegalías" to open up

mining royalties. Tech savvy applications developed to deploy powerful anti-corruption analytics. In India, the application "I paid a bribe" lets citizens report bribery and fraud in dealings with government officials. In Brazil, the "Observatory for Public Expenditure" tracks almost \$5 trillion in spending made public in the government transparency portal [2]. Open data principles advocated by the current legal framework of the government of Indonesia lack the proactive disclosure and openness components [3]. These are only reporting mechanisms, however, and they do not provide redress.

The speed and scale at which corruption is fought nowadays is carried out by digitalization, where Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has opened new doors for the prevention, detection, and prosecution of corruption [4]. These tools range from digitalization of public services

(which removes opportunities for public officials to misuse their discretionary powers), upward transparency (whereby the state receives citizen feedback to understand how lower-level bureaucrats are performing), downward transparency (whereby government activities are made more transparent to citizens), and the mobilisation of citizens. Alongside standard ICT innovations, distributed ledger technology (DLT), a blockchain technology which also offers new potential to fight corruption, which though is still in its infancy [5].

Host of other measures have been adopted: promulgating anti-corruption policy, having comprehensive conflict of interest rules for civil servants on asset declaration, establishing a viable network to monitor compliance with ethical rules, providing institutional and operational independence of the prosecution service, enforcing merit-based recruitment and admission to higher education and training, adopting performance appraisal rules for certain categories of civil servants, limiting exemptions to wider access to information, introducing criminal procedure for the enforcement of the corporate liability for corruption offences, increasing detection and be more proactive through extensive use of analytical tools, giving enough instruments to prosecutors to early detect and investigate complex corruption cases, providing specialized anti-corruption prosecution body or unit, establishing performance indicators for integrity monitoring, amending teachers' recruitment; wages; code of conduct and ethics, transferring of education-related processes at risk of malpractice to electronic platform, sufficient funding and strengthening procurement policy and implementation, maintaining and publishing the data on the corruption complaints; investigations; prosecutions; convictions and sanctions in the education sector [6], [7]. These approaches without administered by citizens with good and cultured human character would certainly would not create lasting solution to corruption risk.

While all the tools mentioned above are, in one way or another, used in the context of anti-corruption work, none of them is guaranteed to be

successful as corruption is increasing in Nigeria. Tools that aim to leverage downward or upward transparency, for instance, might provide useful data that can be used to fight corruption, but they do not necessarily result in more accountability and an actual decrease in corruption. The relationship between transparency and accountability is not linear and is indeed rather complex.

However, one pertinent suggestion to corruption challenges was setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanism promoting performance by state bodies to review progress and evaluate impact of implementation [6].

To proffer solution to [6], this paper explores the impact of human character and information system on corruption risk. The aim is to ascertain whether using information system for tracking and evaluation human character as a primary factor for deciding whether a candidate is a corruption risk before being considered for election or appointment into an administrative position can improve corruption free governance.

A. Research Questions

- Does a leader's character undermine corruption free governance?
- Would using Information system for monitoring and evaluating human character as a primary factor for deciding whether a candidate is a corruption risk before being considered for election or appointment into an administrative position improves corruption free governance?

B. Rationale and Motivation

A permanent solution to poverty in Nigeria is an anti-corruption strategy that will raise Nigeria to a status of providing for the citizens. Almost all the existing anti-corruption measures adopted in Nigeria do not fight against the primary sources of corruption which is the human behavior. Human character serving as the primary check for corrupt practices is essential as this would mean that the preceding research findings on anti corruption practices (e-governance, open data principles, and other activities carried out using ICT tools) would be driven by cultured and good character oriented

administrative personnel. This will significantly reduce embezzlement of public fund and promotes judicious use of the fund to improve the living standard of the society and leading to “zero-crime” society and eradicate poverty.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The study being quantitative employed the use of a structured questionnaire to elicit data from respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A dealt with the related crimes that could undermine corruption free governance for answering the first research question. While section B focused on whether using Information system for monitoring and evaluating human character before being elected or appointed into any administrative position would improve corruption free governance answers the second research question.

One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to respondents. Eighty (80) questionnaires representing 80% were collected. Twenty (20) questionnaires representing 20% were not returned. Therefore, the analysis was based on the twenty (80) completed questionnaires, which were at the disposal of the researcher.

C. Methods of Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Study (SPSS). Identified options were defined and codes assigned to them. Descriptive analysis was used to determine the mean and standard deviation. The clustered mean was calculated from the mean. The criterion mean was determined from the codes. These were used to determine whether the respondents’ responses about any question is accepted or rejected. The mean or clustered mean above the criterion mean indicates that the respondents’ responses about a question is accepted, whereas the mean or the clustered mean below the criterion mean indicates that the respondents responses about a question is rejected. The question that required written opinions from respondents were summarized to bring out the similarities that

could be used to point out a unified knowledge to the study.

D. Area of Study

This study was carried out in Elele township, Rivers State, South South Senatorial Zone of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The study population was made up of the people selected by simple random sampling which include; teaching staff of government and private schools in Elele, staff of government and private establishments in Elele, youths, business men and women in Elele.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

- Question No 1: what related crimes undermine corruption free governance?

TABLE I
CRIMES THAT CAN UNDERMINE CORRUPTION FREE GOVERNANCE

S/N	Questionnaire item	\bar{X}	SD	N	Remarks
1	Embezzlement of public funds	4.63	.495	80	Accept
2	Falsification of data	4.47	.512	80	Accept
3	Cultism	4.31	.477	80	Accept
4	Unaccountability	4.63	.512	80	Accept
5	Raping	4.36	.495	80	Accept
6	Taking advantage of opposite gender	4.94	.495	80	Accept
7	Undefined character	4.89	.779	80	Accept
8	Unsatisfactory character	4.47	.657	80	Accept
9	Other crime against rules and regulations	4.57	.512	80	Accept
Criterion mean		3.00			
Cluster mean		4.58			

Key and code for determining criterion mean: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Disagree = 3, Strongly disagree = 2, No opinion = 1

Table 3.1 indicates that the specific crimes with respect to human character had an overall clustered mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.58$) which is above the criterion mean ($\bar{X} = 3.00$). This means that the crimes influence corruption free governance. The table further indicates that, each of the crimes: embezzlement, falsification, cultism,

unaccountability, raping, opposite gender advantage, undefined character, unsatisfactory character, and other crimes had high mean scores above the criterion mean ($\bar{X} = 4.63, 4.47, 4.31, 4.63, 4.36, 4.94, 4.89, 4.47, 4.57$) respectively. This means that the corruption free governance is undermined by these crimes.

- Question No 2: would use Information system for monitoring and evaluating human character before being elected or appointed into any administrative position improve corruption free governance?

TABLE III
USING INFORMATION SYSTEM TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE CHARACTER FOR CORRUPTION FREE GOVERNANCE

S/N	Questionnaire item	\bar{X}	SD	N	Remark
10	Crime information system should be used in deciding whether a person is a corruption risk before being elected or appointed into any leadership position	4.57	.507	80	Accept
11	Awareness of the use of crime information system in deciding candidates who would be qualified to contest or be appointed would improve corruption free governance	3.47	1.020	80	Accept
12	Information system would provide and maintain database and statistics of Nigerian citizens	4.57	.606	80	Accept
13	Information system would ensure efficient documentation of citizens' crimes	4.31	.477	80	Accept
14	Information system would reduce effort used in obtaining crimes issues	3.94	.705	80	Accept
15	Information would maintain valid Nigerians	3.94	.705	80	Accept
Criterion mean		3.00			
Cluster mean		4.13			

Table 1.2 indicates that the people's general opinion about the information system had an overall clustered mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.13$) which is above the criterion mean ($\bar{X} = 3.00$). This means that the public accepted the above opinions about the information system. The table further indicates that, Using information system for deciding, awareness

of the crime effects, maintaining of database and statistics, proper documentation and reducing effort, had high mean scores above the criterion mean ($\bar{X} = 4.57, 3.47, 4.57, 4.31, 3.94, 3.94$) respectively. This means that the people accept these opinions about the information system.

A. Limitations

1. Data collection may not represent the entire population and hence may not be generalized
2. The data may be biased hence there may be better approaches for unbiased data collection outside questionnaire.

B. Constraints

1. There is no time of cover a reasonable percentage of Nigeria population.
2. Lack of fund to finance the project.

C. Recommendations

1. Thorough study on a comprehensive database that would accommodate all the variables necessary for evaluating crimes in different areas of work in Nigeria
2. Implementing an information system for monitoring and evaluation Nigerian citizens behavioral character based on the variables found in number 1 above,

The information system if implemented is expected to serve as the first check to determining whether the citizen is a corruption risk before being appointed or elected into any administrative position.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

A number of strategies have been deployed to curb corruption in Nigeria. To close the gap of monitoring and evaluating performance as suggested by OCDE, 2016, this paper studied the impact of human character in corruption risk and using information system for monitoring and evaluating human character as the first check against corruption. The findings from the study depicts that governance is facing corruption risk due to inherent human character challenges; embezzlement, falsification, cultism, rape,

unaccountability, gender advantage and disobeying rules and regulations and that using information system for evaluation before one is elected or appointed into an administrative position would positively impact on corruption free governance.

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