

## Perception of Anti-Graft War of The Muhammadu Buhari's Administration: A Study of Salem University Students

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### Abstract

Economists have a long-time saying that man by nature is insatiable. This assertion is based on the desire by human beings to gain more wealth. This nature of human beings has made them to be selfish, greedy and corrupt. This study seeks to examine the perception of Salem University Students of Muhammadu Buhari's administration. This study adopted a survey method for data gathering while questionnaire is the instrument for data collection. Two hundred and seventy-four (274) copies of the questionnaire were purposively distributed to the students but 256 were successfully filled and returned. The quantitative method of data analysis was used due to the nature of the study. The findings revealed that President Muhammadu Buhari is not serious about the war against corruption. Furthermore, it was discovered that the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is selective, among other findings. Based on these findings, the study recommends among others that politics should be separated from governance, especially by an administration that wants to fight corruption. Therefore, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari should give a new face to the anti-corruption war by ensuring that members of the ruling party and others who are corrupt are punished according to the law. Cross-carpeting of politicians from opposition parties to the ruling All Progressives Congress should not be seen as grounds for the pardoning of corrupt politician.

Keywords: Corruption, Awareness, Government, Salem, University

### Introduction

Economists have a long-time saying that man by nature is insatiable. This assertion is based on the desire by human beings to gain more wealth. This nature of human beings has made them to be selfish, greedy and corrupt. Therefore, in most societies of the world, corrupt tendencies abound. More so, the degree of corruption varies from country to country just as punitive measures.



On the African continent, corruption has been widely reported and acknowledged. For instance, African countries have been accused of being "corrupt" in foreign media on countless occasions. There is no doubt, some of these charges are true, as there are both domestic and foreign investigations of corruption cases in Africa. Thus, in a bid to curb corruption in Africa, the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption was developed to provide national, sub-regional and regional support for anti-corruption institutions in Africa by allowing non-state actors such as Civil Society Groups to play a critical role in the anti-corruption campaign in the continent (Momoh, 2015).

In Nigeria, the issue of corruption has become a subject of power struggle. Corruption in Nigeria has been regarded in many studies as being endemic and is as old as the country itself (Momoh, 2013). Besides, studies have shown that the history of Nigeria is characterized by corruption amplified by her encounter with the European imperialists. The encounter took three stages namely slave trade, the partition of Africa by the European powers who scrambled for territories therein, and the Christianization of Africa which occurred during the partition. Even after Nigeria's independence, the country is still grappling with corruption, as social crime permeates every sphere of the nation's life. Moreover, corruption in Nigeria exists at the national, sub-national and local levels. It exists in government and non-governmental organizations as well as religious and non-religious organizations.

However, in recent years especially under President Muhammadu Buhari led All Progressives Congress (APC) there has been a campaign for a change of government using corruption as grounds for their struggle for a change of power from the PDP-led administration. Therefore, on assuming office, as President of Nigeria in the 2015 presidential election, President Muhammadu Buhari was seen as a corrupt-free person. Thus, would curb corruption in the country. During his inaugural speech in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari maintained his promise to fight corruption, among other challenges facing Nigeria.

After his inauguration and having settled for governance, expectations were high from President Muhammadu Buhari's administration to fight corruption. Therefore, making the anti-graft agencies-the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), swung into action. Not long, EFCC, discovered 43, 449, 947-dollar, 800 euro and 23, 218 Naira, belonging to the National Intelligence Agency in a house in Ikoyi area of Lagos State. This saga was popularly referred to as Ikoyigate. Apart from the Ikoyigate incident, Muhammadu Buhari's administration through the EFCC charged a former spokesman for the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Olisah Metuh to court, among other cases over allegation of corruption (Momoh, 2020).

On the whole, President Muhammadu Buhari had since concluded his first four years tenure and begun the second phase having been reelected in 2019. His administration has maintained that fighting corruption, insecurity and revamping the economy has remained its focal points. But the opposing parties, especially the PDP and some Nigerians believe that President Muhammadu Buhari led anti-graft war is selective while others believe that the administration is more corrupt than that of his immediate predecessor, former President Goodluck Jonathan. Therefore, this study examines the perception of students of Salem University, Lokoja about the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, from 2015 till 2021.



### **Conceptual Review: Corruption**

Corruption is one concept and societal problem that has attracted many interests and conceptualization. Igwe (2010) notes that corruption occurs in any organized, interdependent system in which parts are either not performing their duties as ethically expected or are performing it abysmally to the detriment of the system's original intent. According to Rek (2015) "Corruption is a significant nuisance that affects us all. It weakens democratic institutions, inhibits the rule of law, undermines public trust and negatively affects economic performance. As it is closely knit with the abuse of power, it fosters inequalities and injustices and can lead to discrimination between different groups in society. Therefore, it is a severe obstacle to political stability, social and economic advancement.

In the views of Princewill (2015) corruption dates back to the history of the world. Today, corruption is endemic in many countries of the world. Though, the incidence and magnitude of corrupt activities are not the same in every country of the world. This is because some countries are more corrupt than others, while some have been able to properly manage the challenges pose by corruption while other are struggling to team the growing tide of corruption. Besides, despite its unending crusade against corruption globally it has become a household word in many societies especially Nigeria.

Nmah (2017), argues that the origin of corruption in Nigeria can be traced to maladministration that characterized various administration since the country's independence in 1960. Nmah (2017) added that corruption in Nigeria is deeply rooted in the country's traditional and religious values. However, Ekenam et al (2017) note that this is because corruption is seen as one of the major impediments to the economic development of the nation. Even with the presence of anti-corruption agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (Salisu, 2000), nearly every sphere of human endeavor in Nigeria is affected by corruption and no profession is spared either.

### **Literature Review**

Nzeribe (2017) asserts that there is overwhelming evidence that despite being naturally endowed with abundant natural and human resources, corruption has reduced Nigeria to a state of hopelessness. With more than five decades since the colonial masters left the shores of Nigeria, the country is yet to find its feet and bearing in the area of governance and accountability to its citizens. Despite the huge resources flowing into its treasury from the sale of crude oil, more than ninety per cent of the population survives below the poverty margin. It is evident that with responsible management and accountability in governance, the monster called corruption can be reduced drastically.

Another study by Ekpo et al (2016), discovered that the generality of Nigerians perceivethe anti-graft war to be targeted at the members of the former ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). This insinuation is made more germane by the fact that several petitions written against top members of the Buhari led All Progressive Congress (APC) such as Rotimi Ameachi (former governor of Rivers State) and Babatunde Raji Fashola (former governor of Lagos State) have not seen the light of the day. Instead, the president has appointed this duo into his cabinet as ministers and compensated them with juicy portfolios.

Another study by McWilliams et al (2016), entitled "Analysis of President Buhari's Anti-Corruption Policy: A Reality or An Illusion?", discovered that the causes of corruption are from various institutional and political factors stemming from the weak structure and monopoly

of the economy by the federal government. Its effects on the nation's socio-political and economic development are numerous and devastating. It has damaged the image of the country abroad to the extent that Nigeria is tagged as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. This has discouraged foreign investors and caused inflation and the depreciation of our currency.

Ola et al (2014) in their study entitled "Effects of Corruption on Economic Development in Nigeria" ascertained that there is a clear-cut correlation between corruption and economic growth, and if stringent measures are not taken about it, the development of the affected country would be impaired. Corrupt regimes always yield disastrous results. Corruption which is equal to monopoly plus discretion, minus accountability has serious impediments to sustainable development, especially in developing countries. It has stolen the wealth of resource-rich nations like Nigeria thereby making people to be trapped in poverty.

Moreover, Princewill (2015) ascertained that the problem of corruption involves both highly and lowly placed in society. From the persons attendant who hides peoples files until he/she is given something to boss who uses his/her position to steal and loot what belongs to the people. In Nigeria, all the social institutions are influenced by corruption. The result of corruption is nothing but underdevelopment. Princewill, therefore, concluded that society should endeavor to shun leaders and individuals identified to have stolen public money thus creating abject poverty; instead of worshipping them for their ill-gotten wealth. Politics should be seen as a way for an individual to make his/her contribution to the development of society instead of an avenue to loot public funds. Good morals in society should be taught and appreciated right from nursery through primary, secondary schools, to university level instead of emphasizing money and corrupt tendencies. The problem of inequality should be addressed to reduce it to a minimal level where those who work hard can achieve success substantially.

Nmah (2017), in a study entitled "Corruption in Nigeria: A Culture or Retrogressive Factor?" discovered that corruption as a problem to Nigeria is characterized by economic sabotage, terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, human trafficking, prostitution, and the like which are responsible for ethnicity, religious extremism and underdevelopment in the country. Corruption is both a culture and retrogressive factor in Nigeria. Nmah, therefore, concluded among others that total restructuring of the present system of public governance in Nigeria to usher in a new ethical paradigm, explaining leadership as a role for those men and women who desire to serve the state and citizenry. When such leaders emerge, corruption shall diminish. However, none of these works studied the perception of the anti-graft war of Muhammadu Buhari's administration. This is the gap in the literature which this present study seeks to address.

### **Research Methodology**

This work adopts the survey research design. The population of the study consist of the entire 873 students of Salem University.

The Sampling size and sampling technique adopted for this study was Tayo Yamane's formula for the study:

$$1+N(e)^2$$

Where N=Total population

e=Degree of difference.

The total number of Salem University Students is 873

So,  
873

$$\frac{1+873 (0.05)^2}{873}$$

$$\frac{1+873 (0.0025)}{873}$$

$$\frac{3.1825}{873}$$

$$=274$$

Therefore 274 will be the sample size for this study.

The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire, which contains two hundred and seventy-four items in all. The two hundred and seventy-four (274) copies of the questionnaire were distributed randomly to students at the various colleges in the university. Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher to the respondents. The copies of the questionnaire were later retrieved from the respondents after they had been filled.

The data were analyzed using percentages, simple figures and frequency distribution tables, Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) from Likert-type questions. In analyzing data from the five-point scale Likert-type question in the instrument, responses to items are shown below.

- Strongly Agree (SA) = 5 points
- Agree (A) = 4 points
- Undecided (U) = 3 points
- Disagree (D) = 2 points
- Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point

From these, the Weighted Mean Score (WMS) is 3.00 (i.e. 5+4+3+2+1) divided by 5, using the formula:

$$WMS = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

Where

$$WMS = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

$\sum fx$  = Summation of frequency x score and

$\sum f$  = Summation of frequencies

### Presentation of Data and Discussion of Findings

**Table 1 Gender of Respondents**

Sex	Figure	Percentage
Male	117	46
Female	139	54
Total	256	100

**Source: (Survey, 2021)**

The table above shows that female respondents are more than male respondents with 60-40 percentage, respectively.

**Table 2 Ages of Respondents**

Age Bracket	Figure	Percentage
18-30	167	65
30-35	43	17
36-40	29	11
40 and above	17	7
Total	256	100

**Source: (Survey, 2021)**



The above table shows that most of the respondents are between the age bracket of 18-30 (65%). This is followed by those within the age bracket of 30-35 with only 17%. The least is those within the age bracket of 40 and above while the third are those within the age bracket of 36-40.

**Question 3 President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration promised to fight corruption**

Strongly Agree	156	5	780	WMS	Decision
Agree	90	4	360		
Undecided	5	3	15		
Disagree	0	2	0		
Strongly Disagree	5	1	5		
Total	256	15	1,160	4.5	Accepted

The table above shows that the aggregate weighted mean score is 4.5, which is above the established 3-point criterion for Weighted Mean Score. To this end, we accept that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari promised to fight corruption.

**Question 4 Since the inception of President Muhammadu Buhari’s until now, he has been fighting corruption**

Strongly Agree	15	5	75	WMS	Decision
Agree	83	4	332		
Undecided	25	3	75		
Disagree	118	2	236		
Strongly Disagree	15	1	15		
Total	256	15	733	2.8	Rejected

The above table indicates that the aggregate weighted mean score is 2.8, which is less than the established 3-point criterion for Weighted Mean Score. Hence reject the submission that since the inception of President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration until now he has been fighting corruption.

**Question 5 President Muhammadu Buhari is serious about the war against corruption**

Strongly Agree	18	5	90	WMS	Decision
Agree	30	4	120		
Undecided	13	3	39		

Disagree	138	2	276		
Strongly Disagree	57	1	57		
Total	256	15	582	2.27	Rejected

The finding contained in the table above shows that the aggregate weighted mean score is 2.27, which is less than the recognized 3-point criterion for Weighted Mean Score. So, we reject the submission that President Muhammadu Buhari is serious about the war against corruption.

Question 6 The anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is selective

Strongly Agree	57	5	285	WMS	Decision
Agree	111	4	444		
Undecided	20	3	60		
Disagree	41	2	82		
Strongly Disagree	27	1	27		
Total	256	15	898	3.50	Rejected

The finding contained in the table above shows that the aggregate weighted mean score is 3.50, which is greater than the recognized 3-point standard for Weighted Mean Score. Therefore, we accept that the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is selective

Question 7 Only members of the opposition parties and his long-time enemies are mostly targeted for the anti-corruption war

Strongly Agree	89	5	445	WMS	Decision
Agree	121	4	484		
Undecided	13	3	39		
Disagree	21	2	42		
Strongly Disagree	12	1	12		

Total	256	15	1,022	3.9	Accepted
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The above table indicates that the aggregate weighted mean score is 3.9, which is greater than the recognized 3-point criterion for Weighted Mean Score. So, we accept that it is only members of the opposition party and long-time enemies of President Muhammadu Buhari that are mostly targeted for the anti-corruption war.

Question 8. My views about the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is based on my ethnic background

Strongly Agree	14	5	70	WMS	Decision
Agree	4	4	16		
Undecided	89	3	267		
Disagree	10	2	20		
Strongly Disagree	139	1	139		
Total	256	15	512	2	Accepted

The finding as contained in the above table shows that the aggregate weighted mean score is 2, which is less than the recognized 3-point criterion for Weighted Mean Score. So, we reject the submission that the views of the respondents about the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is based on their ethnic background.

Question 9 My views about the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is based on available records

Strongly Agree	61	5	305	WMS	Decision
Agree	136	4	544		
Undecided	17	3	51		
Disagree	11	2	22		
Strongly Disagree	31	1	31		
Total	256	15	953	3.72	Accepted

The above table shows that the aggregate weighted mean score is 3.72, which is greater than the recognized 3-point criterion for Weighted Mean Score. Therefore, we accept that the views of the respondents about the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is based on available records.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that students of Salem University are very much aware of the anti-corruption of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. The students know that the administration promised to fight corruption but has not lived up to expectations. This has answered research question One: Are students of Salem University aware of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration? The perception of Students of Salem University is that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is not serious about the much-talked-about fight against corruption. This is as his administration promised to tackle corruption headlong in Nigeria. More so, we conclude that the Muhammadu Buhari administration's fight against corruption is targeted





mostly against members of the opposition parties and long-time perceived friends of the president. This finding goes against the advice by Joda (2010) that political leadership should demonstrate committed to the eradication of corruption in every sphere of human society. Besides, political leaders should show exemplary leadership style by adopting a modest lifestyle, and avoid indulging in corrupt practices. Also, corrupt culprits should be punished, regardless of their position or status in society. This will among other things serve as deterrence to others. The finding has, however, answered research question two: What is the perception of Salem University students about the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration? The perception of students of Salem University about the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is based on available records and not based on the ethnic background of the respondents. This has answered research question three: Is their perception based on ethnic coloration?

### Recommendations

Firstly, President Muhammadu Buhari's administration should move beyond creating awareness to punishing corrupt individuals irrespective of who is involved. This will among other things serve as deterrence to corrupt culprits in Nigeria.

Secondly, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari must give a new face to the anti-corruption war by ensuring that members of the ruling party and others who are corrupt are punished according to the law. Cross-carpeting of politicians from opposition parties to the ruling All Progressives Congress should not be seen as grounds for the pardoning of corrupt politicians.

Thirdly, the Federal Government requires the support of every stakeholder in Nigeria in the fight against corruption in this country. Thus, there is need for the stakeholders to give the government of the day the support needed to curb corruption in the country.

Lastly, government at all levels in Nigeria needs the desired for political will in its fights against corruption. This is because the willingness of President Muhammadu Buhari administration to fight against all forms of corruption in the country remain key if the government expect to win the war against corruption.

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