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## **Public Perception of Media Reportage of the Anti-Corruption Crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari**

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### **Abstract**

The study examined public perception of anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari. The study was anchored on the self-perception theory propounded by Daryl Bem in 1972. Survey method was used for the study. The population of this study focused on respondents from south-south states of the country, which was projected in 2017 to be 39, 615 228. Using Australian Calculator, the researcher arrived at a sample size of 385. The sampling procedures that were used in this study were cluster, non proportionate and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. Findings revealed that over 80% of the respondents were aware of the anti-corruption war of President Buhari. It was also revealed that 60% of the respondents in South-South states were knowledgeable about the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari. Findings further revealed that 55.7% of the respondents in South-South states were of the perception that the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari is not satisfactory. It is recommended that government should be more objective, open minded, transparent and proactive in the anti-corruption crusade as a way of winning the sympathy of the people.

## Background

When David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, in his discussion with the Queen of England on Tuesday May 10th, 2016, described Nigeria and Afghanistan as the fantastically corrupt countries of the world (CNN, 2016), it came as a surprise to many Nigerians. The statement became worrisome because Transparency International has already ranked Nigeria as the 36th corrupt country in the world, meaning that there were about 35 corrupt countries ahead of Nigeria (TVC News Nigeria, 2016). To worsen the whole scenario, President Muhammadu Buhari stated that he needs no apology from the British Prime Minister. Rather, he is interested in collecting looted funds from the British Government (TVC News Nigeria, 2016). These mixed opinion and perception of the people call for serious attention, the reason being that ever since the administration of President Buhari took over governance, it has focused all its strength in the fight against corruption.

There are indices to show that corruption has become an endemic issue in Nigeria, which has virtually paralysed the social, political and economic life of the nation. A look at the index of corruption in the country will reveal the seriousness of the matter. In 2011, Nigeria was ranked 143rd most corrupt country out of 183 countries. In 2012, Nigeria was rated 139th out of 178 countries and in 2013, Nigeria was placed at the 144th position out of 177 countries. In the last report, Nigeria was rated 130 out of 174 countries (Otinuga, 2016). Little wonder why the crusade against it remains the scorecard with which Nigerians and the international community measure the performance of any administration.

Corruption did not originate from Nigeria and can be partly traced to our historical experiences in the hands of our colonial masters whose main agenda was that of foisting on Nigeria and Nigerians a distorted polity and a bifurcated society that is incapable of evolving into nationhood. A State in which diverse primordial sentiments and cleavages will hold sway leaving the people deeply divided continually thus will be perpetually incapable of taking its glorious place in the comity of nations; a nation that will be unable to serve as the ultimate driver of the African challenge in the global arena (Jimoh, 2016).

Britain, being Nigeria's colonial master, could therefore be roundly accused of being the originator and precursor of corruption in Nigeria. The colonisers did not only institute corruption in Nigeria, they also created a distorted political process which has led to the various problems the country faces today. The colonial masters also used, and are still using, their Multinational Corporations of British origin, to introduce influence peddling as a means of circumventing official policies and regulations in their favour (Jimoh, 2016). It is, therefore, not surprising that some of the giant oil companies have been accused of arming some of the militia in the Niger Delta region as a way of keeping the country from developing, so that they can continue to profit from oil deposits in the region.

It is however a cheering news that the present administration under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari has launched a renewed campaign against corruption. Since the election and inauguration of President Buhari, he has made it clear that the fight against corruption will be a priority of his government. Secondly, the Buhari administration has set up a presidential committee on anti-corruption headed by renowned legal icon, Professor Itse Sagay. The mandate of the committee includes among other things, to formulate a strategy and co-ordinate the anti-corruption war of the administration ensuring that all sectors of the Nigerian society are involved in the fight (Otinuga, 2016).

Several regimes, especially under this democratic dispensation, have made efforts to fight corruption, but it has remained widespread. In most cases, the way and manner the crusade is carried out becomes a thing of concern for the general public. Some see the crusade as a "select and strike approach", "fight against opposition members" and/or "a welcome development". These diverse opinions have

remained issues in the anti-graft crusade. Hence, the researcher examined public perception of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration which started in May 2015.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Not minding the fact that successive governments in power have tried to curb the issue of corruption, the menace still remains in the system. The regime of President Muhammadu Buhari came with the slogan fighting corruption; however, the approach has been questioned by the general public, leading to diverse opinion and perception about the anti-graft crusade. Could it be that something is wrong with the approach or that the public are not properly informed or carried along? Hence, the need to examine peoples' perception of anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari

### **Research Objectives**

The main purpose of this study is to examine public perception of anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the extent to which the public are aware of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari.
2. Ascertain the level of public knowledge about the anti-corruption campaign.
3. Identify the source of public knowledge about the anti-corruption crusade.
4. Examine the perception of the people about the anti-corruption crusade.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of public awareness of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari?
2. What is the level of public knowledge about the anti-corruption campaign?
3. What are the sources of public knowledge about the anti-graft crusade?
4. What is the perception of the public about the anti-corruption crusade?

### **Research Hypothesis**

- H<sub>1</sub>: High level of knowledge of the anti-corruption campaign is dependent on the respondent's level of awareness of the anti-corruption campaign of President Muhammadu Buhari.
- H<sub>0</sub>: The level of knowledge of the anti-corruption campaign is not dependent on the respondent's level of awareness of the anti-corruption campaign of President Muhammadu Buhari.

### **Significance of the Study**

Generally, this study will be of utmost importance to the anti-corruption commissions as it will reveal the impression people hold about them regarding the fight against corruption. This will help them re-strategise on the possible approach that will be acceptable to the people and the law at the same time. The study will also help the society come to an understanding of the fact behind the fight against corruption. It will help expose the public to the challenges faced by anti-corruption workers in their fight against corruption.

## Scope of Study

The scope of this study is primarily centred on the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari and the perception the public have about it. For this reason, people from South-South, Nigeria served as respondents for the study. They were examined for the purpose of the study with the aim of eliciting their opinion on the anti-graft crusade.

## Literature Review

### Corruption Defined

Corruption is defined as "an arrangement that involves an exchange between two parties (the demander and the supplier) which (i) has an influence on the allocation of resources either immediately or in the future; and (ii) involves the use or abuse of public or collective responsibility for private ends" (Salisu 2006). According to Amundsen (1996) as quoted by Enor, Chime and Ekpo (2016), corruption as an act which deviates from the rules of conduct governing the action of someone in a position of public authority because of private regarding motives such as wealth, power and status.

Similarly, International Monetary Fund (IMF) explained that corruption is an abuse of office or trust for private benefit: and is a temptation indulged in by not only public officials but also by those in positions of trust and authority in private enterprise or non-profit organizations. IMF also classified corruption into bureaucratic or political, cost reduction or benefit enhancing, briber or bribe initiated, coercive or collusive, centralized or decentralized, predictable or arbitrary (IMF, 2017). Onuigbo & Emeh (2015) succinctly tabulated the forms of corruption below:

Type	Status of Main Perpetrator	Enabling Means	Usual Motive	Victims of Corruption
Political corruption	- Chief Executives - Other Political Office Holders	- political power - economic power - social power	-to gain or retain political power - to victimize	- ideals and values of the polity - political opponents
Economic and commercial corruption	- businessmen - contractors - consultants	- economic power - political and social connections	to make more profits and money	the generality of tax payers and other citizens
Administrative and professional corruption	-highly placed civil servants and executives of parastatals	Administrative authority - technicality, exclusivity and - professional such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, university teachers, etc.	- material wealth - cultivation of political and social connections autonomy of the professions	the generality of tax payers and other citizens - consumers of the professions
Organized corruption	- political, economic, social and bureaucratic elites - high echelons of control agencies	influential connections to information sources - control and enforcement authority	Money and material wealth	- government treasure - private individuals
Working class corruption	- artisans - junior and intermediate staff - market women and men	Technicalities of occupational skill - ignorance and carelessness and acquiescence of	Money and material wealth to make ends meet	Consumers of goods and services

Source: Onuigbo & Emeh (2015)

## **Nigeria and the Anti-Corruption Crusade**

Corruption has many faces and meanings. It could also be the same wine in different bottles. The word corruption sounds light on our tongues, but it has bedevilled and truncated our beloved Nigeria. Over the years, this torment has found solace in our minds and our dear country Nigeria. As a result, so many patriots and servicemen have suffered a great defeat in the hands of corruption (Gin, 2016).

Corruption is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges in Nigeria. It is a challenge that is not only leading to impoverishment and loss of lives, but also threatening the stability of the country. The fight against corruption in the public sector came to limelight in 1966 when the Military identified corruption by politicians as one of the reasons for taking over the then civilian government. Since then successive governments have been waging war against the menace (Otunuga, 2016).

Before the present administration, preceding administrations in Nigeria had successively instituted legal instruments, measures and policies designed to combat corruption in the country. According to Enweremadu (2012), during the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo in May 29, 1999, corruption campaign was pursued through different methods and directed at achieving a number of objectives, three of which are most perceptible.

The first was to bring about a sharp drop in the incidence of corruption, through the speedy arrest and prosecution of corrupt public officials. This was to be achieved through the establishment of new anti-corruption agencies, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), inaugurated in 2000 and 2003 respectively. Previous experience has shown that such institutions, which have produced relative successes in some countries, were not easily adaptable to Africa – never mind to Nigeria specifically, where the necessary administrative capacity (adequate funds, quality manpower, strong laws, and efficient judicial systems) and strong political support are often lacking, and prevailing political logic tends to favour the abuse of office and misappropriation of public resources.

The second objective was to reduce or remove incentives for corruption among public officials, via a comprehensive reform of the public sector (including the judiciary). Specifically, the reforms aimed at the following: eliminating monopoly, by privatisation and deregulation; reducing discretion, by the streamlining of functions and reinforcement of controls; and removing administrative opacity, by the increasing of transparency and accountability, particularly in public revenue collection and expenditure. The aggressive implementation of these policies, it was hoped, would reduce the opportunities for corruption among public officials. Some aspects of these reforms – privatisation, reform of the management of public finance, and the adoption of a new policy on employment and compensation (also known as ‘professionalisation’ and ‘rightsizing’) in the public service – were pursued with considerable vigour. But their cumulative effect on corruption has proved difficult to see.

The third objective was to redress some of the worst consequences of past corruption on the economy and improve the financial health of the nation. This goal was to be achieved through the identification of some of the offshore bank accounts and assets – landed properties, companies, shares, and so on – owned by corrupt Nigerians and ensure they were duly confiscated and the proceeds repatriated. These remedial measures did not achieve the desired results to prohibit and prescribe punishment for corrupt practices. The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000 was the first to be passed into law by the Obasanjo Presidency, while the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) were inaugurated on the 29th of September 2000. There is also, the Economic and Financial Crimes (Uniamikogbo, 2007).

Unfortunately, certain factors have continued to undermine the effectiveness and integrity of the anti-corruption crusade. One of these is the use of the anti-graft agencies to witch hunt perceived oppositions to government in power. This was the case between 1999 and 2007. Also, the agencies were under funded, thereby making it rather difficult for them to effectively prosecute those accused of graft. These factors were more pronounced during the tenure of the immediate past administration. Above all, interference from the powers that be in the corridors of power as well as the issue of immunity clause hampered the operation of the agencies significantly. This was because, for example, the immunity clause made it impossible for ICPC and EFCC to take on serving governors even when the agencies have evidence against them (Otunuga, 2016).

When President Buhari took over the mantle of leadership on May 29, 2015, he vowed to combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored. He started the anti-corruption campaign by arresting Col. Dasuki (rtd), the then National Security Adviser of President Jonathan. Dasuki's accomplices that are of the opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) and those in the military were arrested and charged to court by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over the massive scam in weapons and defence procurements that led to the misuse of three trillion-naira defence budget since 2011, under the guise of fighting the notorious Boko Haram menace.

The fight against corruption and impunity by President Buhari's administration has also attracted the goodwill of the international community. At the meeting of the G7, President Buhari pleaded with the leaders of global capitalism to collaborate with Nigeria in fighting terrorism and in fixing her comatose economy while it requested The Obama administration to assist in the repatriation of about 150 billion dollars allegedly looted from the public treasury in the last decade (Otunuga, 2016).

However, some critics of Buhari's anti-corruption war have accused him of not being sincere and holistic in the fight against corruption as virtually all the people and corporate organizations investigated are all of the opposition party –PDP, and his perceived enemies. These people are of the opinion that the President has no moral prestige to fight corruption. Cases like Buhari as Minister of Petroleum, Buhari as a petroleum TET fund chairman, Buhari's certificate forgery, President Buhari harbouring corrupt Ministers in his cabinet were cited to buttress their point (Elemanya & Onya, 2016).

Nigeria is one country where government hikes up the price of essential commodities like petroleum products and does not consider it necessary to increase the wages of its workers commensurately. In other words, successive governments in this country were and are still creating inflation with eyes wide open which worsens the assisting decadence in the country in terms of corruption and misconduct (Gin, 2016).

The essence of paying the police and the citizenry intensely for their services is not due to the tremendous wealth a country has, but because of the realization of the destructive potentials of corruption to any society. Developed countries of the world lived up to their expectations because they know too well that fighting corruption amidst poverty is a farce, and will not elicit the support and compliance of the people. As a matter of fact, human nature being what it is, an anti-crusade cannot succeed under conditions of impoverishment. Unemployment will readily be construed as oppression and tyranny despite the fact that it is being implemented for the good of the society and people (Gin, 2016).

For far too long, Nigeria had been under the gripping claws of corruption and, consequently, the prevailing political situation in the country had constituted an unpleasant jam jar and reached a proportion that Nigerians were beginning to lose hope in the country's political leadership. Corruption has long been the bane of socio-economic cum infrastructural development in Nigeria. It can also be rightly said that corruption is so pervasive in Nigeria because of a culture of poor wages, absence of

effective policy that softens the effect of poverty, weak government institutions and absence of key anti-corruption legislations (Ishiaku, 2015).

Taking a look at other countries that do not produce petroleum in any form like Nigeria does, any do not earn revenue from mineral resources; either solid or liquid but are doing far better than Nigeria despite revenue earnings from columbite, bauxite, tantalite barite and several others which are not even half exploited as they should be, one will surely wonder and ponder over the implications and outcomes of predicament. More so, Nigeria has agricultural products that the world is craning for, groundnut, maize, cotton, palm oil and rubber which if properly utilized will bring about comfort for the Nigerian citizens and maintain an everlasting content among the populace. All these put together show that Nigeria has enough wealth and potentials to be richer, enough to support an anti –corruption crusade which will transform all facets of national life, forever (Gin, 2016).

It must be known now that an authority that does not pay those rendering services it well, those working under its jurisdiction, such an authority does not have any moral right to sanction the workers for acts of corruption. A father that does not feed his children and does not provide lives basics for them, will have God judge him if he punishes them for stealing. If the other, he provides them with basic needs and perhaps with some measures of comfort, he will be justified for punishing them severely if ever they steal. What Nigeria is trying to do with the anti-corruption crusade in the present circumstances is introduce laws in an environment that constantly tempts the individual to break the laws. Within the socio-economic environment in our present day, introducing an anti-corruption law may be foolhardy because the enabling structures for its implementation and compliance are lacking. In Nigeria, an overwhelming majority do not have portable water to drink, they do not have good roads to carry out commercial activities and their income per capita is too low to do anything more than just consume to stay alive. How does one stop a ridiculously low income earner from taking bribe under the present inflationary circumstance? It is like stopping a person who sees something charging out of his eyes from blinking or shutting his eyes (Gin, 2016).

The Nigerian government has much thinking and acting to do, on its own part if its proposed anti-corruption crusade will succeed. Most of the time, some argue that Nigeria multi-ethnicity will not let an anti-corruption crusade thrive. This line of thought holds water only to the extent that government either consciously or by omission, as in the past, continues to perpetuate ethnic sentiments through its actions. To surmount the ethnic problem, government may not need to do more than give every section and nationality in Nigeria a sense of belonging in the nation-state. Ethnic sentiments are fuelled by inequity in the sharing of the national wealth, such as jobs, political appointments, budgetary allocations, in fact, everything that comes from the centre to the states and to the states and regions. In the midst of plenty, nobody remembers tribe. People will only support the crusade for a better Nigeria, a corruption-free Nigeria if they believe in Nigeria. Faith in Nigeria, or in any country, or in anybody comes only with the evidence that one is cared for by the object of his faith or belief. To combat corruption, government should work day and night to fashion out and impudent measures to eschew tribalism in all its ramifications (Gin, 2016).

#### Agenda for Buhari anti-corruption crusade

When the last administration of President Goodluck Jonathan came up with the economic jargon of re-basement which catapulted the Nigerian economy to the leading economy in Africa, we forgot to ask if corruption was also factored in as an economic index before they arrived at the alarming statistics that overnight changed the course of our economic prosperity. In the estimation of Nigerians, the Jonathan government was very guilty of corruption and the statement by the erstwhile president that his administration did not believe that jailing people would end corruption did not also help matters (Ishiaku, 2015).

However, the new administration of President Muhammadu Buhari needs to understand that modern corruption has gone scientific, requiring scientific and institutional approaches in curbing it; there are many angles or dimensions to corruption. There are “political or government corruption”, “electoral corruption”, “legislated corruption”, “economic or financial corruption” and “civil corruption”. In all, it is shocking and alarming that those shouting “anti corruption” in Nigeria’s public offices as presently constituted are either do not understand its fundamental meaning or have chosen to use it to deceive and mislead Nigerians for the purpose of achieving cheap popularity and obtaining mechanical legitimacy (Ishiaku, 2015).

Freedom from corruption or fight against corruption connotes impeccability of character, sound morality and cleanest mindset. It is therefore important that the Buhari government should avoid corrupting its anti-corruption agencies and go to equity with clean hands. That is to say that President Muhammadu Buhari must live by firm example by not only being clean, but also seen to be clean. It is no doubt cheering news that the new administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has launched a renewed campaign against corruption. It is also cheering news that, there appears to be a kind of attitudinal reset in every government institution on the seriousness of the anti-corruption crusade (Ishiaku, 2015).

### **Richard Branson’s Anti-Corruption Crusade in Nigeria**

Western top business men not often talk about corruption in Nigeria that is why whenever any of such opinion comes to the public domain, it is bound to elicit all manners of reactions and responses from all walks of life; some condemning and others applauding, yet, others become non-committal even with their very vocal statements. The reasons for the frugality of publicly stated opinions by Western business men on corruption dynamics and character in Nigeria should be obvious to anyone who has taken a cursory glance at the historical context of the phenomenon especially its diverse and systemic manifestations in our dear country (Jimoh, 2016).

However, for those that did not remember what he said, it is good that his statement as reported by the media is paraphrased:

.... We fought daily battle against government agents who wanted to daily make fortune from us, politicians who saw the government 49% as a meal to seek for all kinds of favour...watchdogs (regulatory body) that didn’t know what to do and persistently asking for bribes at any point...Nigeria people are generally nice but the politicians are very insane...that may be irony because the people make up the politicians...

Was that statement made in his earnest desire to assist in exposing corruption in Nigeria or was it an attempt to smear and besmirch Nigeria thus contributing to the on-going international bashing of the country that has seriously led to low inflow of FDI into the Country? Or, was it just sour grapes as a result of business deals gone badly and as such an attempt to get back at his perceived business enemies (Jimoh, 2016)?

The position of Mr Richard Branson’s from the onset is not overly different from what has been expressed variously in Nigeria on this vexatious issue. The issue of corruption is a deep systemic challenge and according to former member of the Federal House of Representatives – Hon. Dino Melaye, 60% of the nation’s annual budget is lost to corruption. When this is also viewed at the backdrop of the missing Trillions of naira, other findings and controversies trailing the various Fuel Subsidy reports including the Pension scam and most recently, the Ribadu report and the aggressive attempts at rubbishing them within the context of the crisis of underdevelopment confronting the nation, its negative impact on the living index of Nigerians becomes alarmingly overwhelming. But, his blanket tar of all Nigerian public officials including the invidious insinuation of corruption being



Nigerian is not only unacceptable to every discerning mind but to all patriotic Nigerians (Jimoh, 2016).

Branson's position though may have been informed by experience from his inner dealings with various MDAs and federal political leaders in the course of doing business in the country. Perhaps as he said, bribes were requested in return for favour and other influences peddled to get Branson's business arrowhead in Nigeria – the Virgin Atlantic and subsequently the failed joint venture, Virgin – Nigeria in a vantage position to exploit the nation's aviation sector. Agreed there may have been less than honourable and transparent positions driven by pure greed by some of the public officials that he had encounter with, we strongly believe that there still exist within Nigeria today, public officials of great integrity and high moral standing that can compare if not better than the best of the best that could be found in other climes including Richard Branson's Britain (Jimoh, 2016).

One of these manifestations must have been some of the challenges that the business mogul witnessed and was complaining about. For a British owner of a Multi-national Company to suddenly become an anti-corruption crusader in Nigeria, every Nigerian patriot will immediately be alert and question his altruism. If it is to draw awareness to the dangers and existence of this deep contradiction, and, to seek global attention to fashion out strategies for its eradication, then it is a welcome effort that should be supported whole heartedly. But, if it is propelled by the crass intention of getting even with his business associates in political garb by painting every Nigerian public official in bad light, then his statement should be queried and rejected completely not only as public commentators but as patriotic Nigerians whose civic duty it is to protect the image of the nation. It is important that while he rightly takes out time to blame and if possible name the officials or Department and Agencies so involved, he should find time to also look back and berate his people for the damage they did to the various Socio-political processes of Nigeria and perhaps be in the forefront of the campaign to demand reparations from his people (Jimoh, 2016).

Mr Richard Branson was asked what he did to have secured the International Wing of the Murtala Muhammed Airport for his Virgin Nigeria operations while other domestic airlines were using the domestic terminal? Did he not consider what he did as unethical and morally wrong? Did he not consider that as tilting the playing field to his advantage through political influence? Did he not see that as operating in breach and against the provisions of the nation's relevant aviation statutes and regulations? Finally, was the entire operational context of the Virgin group in Nigeria as it lasted not mired in corruption? The very thing Mr Branson seems to be accusing the nation's public officials of. Efforts to answer these questions will only lead to one thing and that is simple; that it is the foreign companies and their governments that have operated in Nigeria that imported corruption into our business environment. They also created the enabling environment for the facilitation and practise of corruption to fester. The locus of this monster therefore can be found in the operations of the MNCs in Nigeria and the sanitisation of their operations in the country will go a long way in solving the problem of corruption in Nigeria. The various cases involving them that attracted global attention can easily be seen in the Siemens Scandal and the Halliburton scandal including the various efforts at selling some of the OMLs (Jimoh, 2016).

This is not the case of trying to hold brief for any official found to have corruptly enriched himself while in office but it is wrong for Mr Branson to have called all Nigerian public officials greedy and corrupt and in the process besmirching the whole of the citizens and peoples of Nigeria. There still remains a remnant of public officials in Nigeria who are committed to enhancing the welfare of the Nigerian people and are determined to work tirelessly to ensure that this nation becomes the best place for every Nigerian to aspire to be. All British or American people cannot be called corrupt just because some of their officials or highly placed citizens got involved in less than wholesome dealings and this are revealed in the Press on daily basis (Jimoh, 2016).

## Empirical Review

A study by Rotimi, E. and Obasaju, B. (2013) titled “Analysis of corruption and economic growth in Nigeria” reviewed the causes and effects of corruption, without leaving out the dynamics of corruption. Also, the study looked at the relationship between corruption and the Nigerian economic growth. The researchers used the ordinary least squares (OLS) to determine the relationship between corruption and economy growth. The study applied the granger causality method to measure the causal relationship that exists between corruption and the gross domestic product (GDP). The study revealed that corruption impairs and impacts economic growth. The researchers therefore recommended that Public anti-corruption initiatives and Public education campaign/programmes should be strengthened and motivated in to address the cause of corruption rather than its effects.

Another related study carried out by Enor, Chime and Ekpo (2016) titled “The Irony of Nigeria’s Fight against Corruption: An Appraisal of President Muhammadu Buhari’s first eight months in office” sought to appraise Nigeria’s strategy in the fight against corruption under President Muhammadu Buhari’s first eight months in office. The researchers used the interview and library research method in collecting data. The researchers concluded that Muhammadu Buhari envisaging the persistent escalation of corruption traits in public offices won the 2015 presidential election pools owing to his firm anti-corruption stands and inclinations to fight it to a standstill. However, he, in his first eight months just like every other Nigerian leader has failed to tackle the issue of corruption but its manifestation. The researchers therefore recommended that corruption can be reduced to its barest minimum if modalities are put in place to prevent and deter the manifestations of corruption rather than fight it.

Another study carried out by Ugoani, J. (2016) titled “Political will and anticorruption crusade management in Nigeria” sought to explore the relevance of political will in anticorruption crusade management in Nigeria, using exploratory research design. The researchers recommended that there should be a demonstration of credible intent by political leaders, stakeholders groups to attack perceived causes or effects of corruption at a systemic level.

Elemanya and Onya’s (2016) paper entitled “analysis of President Buhari’s anti-Corruption Policy: A reality or an illusion?” analysed Buhari’s anti corruption policy. The researchers found out that Buhari’s fight against corruption should be holistic and transparent and recommended that the Nigerian populace and indeed the electorates that voted for change of Buhari’s government must assist the government and challenge it if need be, to fight corruption as promised, during his electioneering campaign and his inaugural speech.

In a study conducted by Sheriff Folarin in 2014 titled “Corruption, Politics and Governance in Nigeria”, how corruption affects the political climate of the country was examined. The study identified some of the weaknesses of the anti-corruption crusade, with the devastating effects on nation-building. The study concluded that “the dangerous consequences of corruption for the nation make it imperative that the anti-corruption war should be intense and backed by new and systematic strategies” (Folarin, 2014, p. 22). The researcher recommended that “anti-corruption agencies should no longer be under the control of the executive arm of government, rather they should be independent of political corruption. Such agencies should rather be controlled and answerable to the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, which is often independent of the Presidency or Executive. Also, the anti-corruption agencies should be headed by a judge of the Supreme Court who has a track record of forthrightness and fearlessness (Folarin, 2014, p. 22).

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the Self-Perception Theory propounded by Daryl Bem in 1972. It is enshrined in the idea that the perception of the people about a particular issue influences their attitude and behaviour. It applies the concept of sensory perception to politics or political activities, just as sensory perception relates to how humans perceive and process sensory stimuli through their five senses (Onyebuchi, 2013).

The major thrust of this theory relates to “how individuals form opinions about issues and the merchandise they offer through the behaviour they display” (Blank, 2012, p.1). Similarly, Flamand (2011) noted that perception theory is any attempt to understand how people’s perception of issues influences their behaviour. Those who study perception try to understand why people make the decisions they do, and how to influence these decisions. Usually, perception theory is used by marketers when designing a campaign for a product or brand” (Onyebuchi, 2013).

This theory is related to the study under review because it helps explain how people form their opinion about issues and how such opinions affect their behaviour as experienced in the fight against corruption.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design for this study is the survey research design. Nwosu and Uffoh (2005, p. 218) noted that “survey research focuses on people, the vital fact of people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivation and behaviour.” Hence, the survey method enabled the researcher to generate data regarding the opinion of the people on the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari.

### **Area of Study**

The area of the study covered public perception of anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari in South-South, Nigeria. This means that the residents in south southern part of Nigeria constituted the focus of the study. South-South geo-political zone is one of the six geo-political zones of the country. The zone consists of Edo, Rivers, Cross River, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom and Delta States.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study focused on respondents from south-south states of the country. The population figure of the people in south-south, Nigeria, according to the 2006 population census, is 21, 014, 655 (NPC, 2006). However, the projected population figure was used. The figure for the projected population is 39, 615 228.

### **Sample Size**

To determine the sample size of this study, therefore, the Australian Calculator was used. The calculator as provided by National Statistical Service (NSS) provides a simplified formula for calculating sample sizes. With a confidence interval of 0.05 and a proportion or estimate of variance (confidence level) of .5, the population of 39, 615 228 produced a basic sample size is 385.

### **Sampling Techniques**

The sampling procedure that was used in this study is the cluster, non proportionate and purposive sampling techniques which allow for the subdivision of south-south zone into states that make up the region, and selection of respondents based on the need of the study. For this reason, two local governments were selected from the state capitals of each of the states that make up south-south geo-

political zone. In all, the local governments used for this study were twelve (12). The sample size of 385 was non-proportionately divided by the twelve (12) local governments ( $385 \div 12 = 32$ ), meaning that 32 copies of the questionnaire were given to each of the twelve local governments. Respondents from these local governments were purposively selected for the study.

### Research Instrument

This study used questionnaire as an instrument to collect data. The questionnaire instrument had two sections: the demographic and psychographic sections. The demographic section was used to elicit information about the bio-data of the respondents, while the psychographic section focused on the research questions.

### Validity/Reliability of the Instrument

Face validity technique was used to validate the research instruments. The instrument was given to three experts in Mass Communication Department of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. First it was tested if the items in the questionnaire are related to the topic under consideration. Their expert scrutiny gave birth to the final copy that was used for the study.

In checking for the reliability of the instrument, a pre-test was conducted in Port-Harcourt to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument (questionnaire). A total of 20 respondents were drawn for this purpose. The reason was to determine whether the responses would be in line with the required result expected from the instrument.

### Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered on face-to-face bases. A total of 385copies of the questionnaire were administered. However, at the end of the exercise, only 336 were retrieved and used for the study.

### Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were presented quantitatively using simple frequency tables, percentages and numbers.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

In this chapter, data collected from the field were presented and analysed. The analyses were based on the returned and usable 336 copies of the questionnaire which amounted to 87% return rate and a loss of 13%. The data were presented in tables, frequencies and numbers.

### Research Question One: *What is the extent of public awareness of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari?*

The first research question sought to find out the level at which the public in south-south states were aware of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari. The data collected is presented in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Respondents Awareness of Anti-Corruption Crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Large extent	271	81%
Moderate	39	12%
Low extent	23	6.7%
Can't say	3	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 above, indicated that 81% of the respondents were, to a large extent, aware of the anti-corruption crusade of Mr. President at a respondent quotient of 271. This is in contrast with the 6.7% of the respondents who had low awareness of the fight against corruption; although, 12% of the respondents are moderately aware of the anti-graft war in the country.

The implication of this finding is that over 80% of the respondents were aware of the anti-corruption war in the country as championed by the administration of President Buhari. This is to say that the awareness is spread across the length and breadth of South-South, Nigeria.

**Research Question Two:** *What is the level of public knowledge about the anti-corruption campaign?*

In establishing the perception of the people on the anti-graft war, it is important to know the level of knowledge of the public upon which they are forming their opinion. It appears that the levels at which people are knowledgeable about issues, the more they are likely to make informed opinion about them. To gather information on the knowledge level of the respondents, respondents were asked to answer cheater questions and then weighted. The weighted scales are presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Respondents level of knowledge**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	49	14.5%
High	153	45.5%
Can't say	3	0.9%
Low	75	22.3%
Very Low	56	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data presented in table 2 above showed that 60% of the respondents have high knowledge of the anti-corruption crusade, while 39% of the respondents have low knowledge of the anti-graft war; although, their knowledge levels are at varying capacities.

The table indicates that 153 respondents indicating 45.5% of the population have high knowledge of the anti-corruption crusade of Mr. President. When this percentage is added to those with very high (49, 14.5%) knowledge of the campaign, it will amount to 60% of the respondents with reasonable knowledge of the crusade. The implication of this finding is that 60% of the respondents in South-South, Nigeria, were knowledgeable about the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari. This indicates an above average knowledge level of the respondents. At this level the people should be able to form an informed perception.

**Research Question Three:** *What are the sources of public knowledge about the anti-graft crusade?*

Now that it has been ascertain that 60% of the respondents are knowledgeable about the anti-corruption crusade, it will be imperative to find out their sources of information, which of course aided their knowledge. To gather data in respect to this question, respondents were asked to indicate one of their major sources of information on the anti-corruption crusade. The findings are as shown in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Respondents sources of information on anti-corruption crusade**

Types of Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Print (Magazines, Newspapers)	58	17.3%
Electronic resources (TV, Radio)	178	53%
New media (Internet, social media)	34	10.1%
Neighbours/friends	63	18.8%
Can't say	3	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data presented in table 3 above showed that the electronic media and neighbours/friends which amounted to 53% and 18.8% respectively were the most important sources of information on the anti-graft crusade of Mr. President. This implies that messages from the electronic media (178, 53%) served as the major sources of information on the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari.

**Research question four:** *What is the perception of the public about the anti-corruption crusade?*

At this point, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the anti-corruptions crusade as an indication of their perception concerning the corruption war of President Buhari. They were asked to indicate once, their perception on the corruption issue vis a vis their level of satisfaction. The data collected in line with this question is presented in table 4 below.

**Table 4: Respondents Perception on the Anti-Corruption Crusade of President Buhari**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very Satisfactory	17	5.1%
Satisfactory	129	38.4%
Not Satisfactory	187	55.7%
Can't say	3	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100%</b>

Reference to table 4 above showed that 187 respondents amounting to 55.7% are not satisfied with the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari. This is against the 43.5% of the respondents who said they were satisfied with the anti-corruption crusade. This satisfaction falls within the category of very satisfactory and satisfactory. The implication of this finding is that 55.7% of the respondents in South-South states were of the perception that the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari is not satisfactory, meaning that they appear not to be happy with the way the crusade is been carried out.

### Discussion of Findings

**Research Question One:** *What is the extent of public awareness of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari?*

The finding of this study in relation to research question one indicates that 81% of the respondents in South-South states were aware of the anti-corruption crusade championed by the administration of

President Buhari. This is to say that the awareness of the anti-corruption drive is spread across the length and breadth of South-South geo-political zone. This finding as presented in table 1 reveals that 81% of the respondents were, to a large extent, aware of the anti-corruption crusade of Mr. President at a respondent quotient of 271. This is in contrast with the 6.7% of the respondents who had low awareness of the fight against corruption; although, 12% of the respondents are moderately aware of the anti-graft war in the country.

**Research Question Two:** *What is the level of public knowledge about the anti-corruption campaign?*

Data collected and analysed in respect to the knowledge level of the people on the anti-corruption crusade revealed that 60% of the respondents in South-South states were knowledgeable about the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari. This indicates an above average knowledge level of the respondents. As presented in table 2 of the study, 153 respondents indicating 45.5% of the population have high knowledge of the anti-corruption crusade of Mr President. When this percentage is added to those with very high (49, 14.5%) knowledge of the campaign, it will amount to 60% of the respondents with reasonable knowledge of the crusade.

**Research Question Three:** *What are the sources of public knowledge about the anti-graft crusade?*

The findings of this study reveal major sources of information on anti-corruption crusade. However, it indicated that messages from the electronic media (178, 53%) served as the major sources of information on the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari. This was followed by interaction with friends and neighbour at 18.8%. The data presented in table 3 show that the electronic media and neighbours/friends which amounted to 53% and 18.8% respectively were the most important sources of information on the anti-graft crusade of Mr. President.

**Research Question Four: What is the perception of the public about the anti-corruption crusade?**

In response to research question four, it was revealed that 55.7% of the respondents in South-South, Nigeria were of the perception that the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari is not satisfactory, meaning that they appear not to be happy with the way the crusade is been carried out. Table 4 which presented the data shows that 187 respondents amounting to 55.7% were not satisfied with the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari. This is against the 43.5% of the respondents who said they were satisfied with the anti-corruption crusade. This satisfaction falls within the category of very satisfactory and satisfactory.

The finding of this study is closely related to that of Sheriff Folarin in 2014 titled “Corruption, Politics and Governance in Nigeria”, which expressed strong dissatisfaction with the execution of the anti-corruption crusade. Sherriff identified some of the weaknesses of the anti-corruption crusade, with the devastating effects on nation-building and concluded that “the dangerous consequences of corruption for the nation make it imperative that the anti-corruption war should be intense and backed by new and systematic strategies” (Folarin, 2014, p.22).

The perception theory also contributes to our understanding of how people build their opinion and how that opinion influences behaviour. It points to the fact that perception theory is any attempt to understand how people’s perception of issues influences their behaviour (Flamand, 2011). This goes a long way to expose the length at which most Nigerian seemed not to be happy with the execution of the anti-corruption war.

### **Summary of the Research Findings**

This section summarizes the research findings presented and analyzed according to the questions that guided the study.

Research question one which sought to find out the extent to which the public were aware of the anti-corruption crusade of President Muhammadu Buhari, revealed that over 80% of the respondents were aware of the anti-corruption war of President Buhari.

Research question two, on the other hand, looks at the level of knowledge of the people about the anti-corruption crusade. Here, it was revealed that 60% of the respondents in South-South states were knowledgeable about the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari.

Research question three examined that the sources of their knowledge of the anti-graft crusade. The findings revealed that messages from the electronic media (178, 53%) served as the major sources of information on the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari.

Research question four sought to ascertain the perception of the people about the anti-corruption crusade. The findings indicated that 55.7% of the respondents in South-South states were of the perception that the anti-corruption crusade of President Buhari is not satisfactory.

### Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is safe to conclude that the awareness on the anti-corruption crusade of Mr. President has gained grounds in South-South, Nigeria. This, no doubt, is the reason for the impressive 60% knowledge of the crusade among the people. For which 55.5% of the respondents are not satisfied with the corruption drive so far. This raises a big question on the drive itself and the way it is being approached.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

- The public need to predispose themselves to the acquisition of knowledge on the anticorruption drive of President Buhari. This is because 60% knowledge might not be enough to appreciate the effort of this administration in fighting corruption.
- On the aspect of the sources of information, it is recommended that people should use their new media gadgets to source for more information regarding the anti-corruption drive. This will no doubt improve the knowledge of the people on the approach and strategies taken to curb corruption in the country.
- Finally, it is recommended that government should be more objective, open minded, transparent and proactive in the anti-corruption crusade as a way of winning the sympathy of the people. Also institutions and channels for prosecuting cases should be allowed to work. This will help the government in gaining public trust in their zero corruption campaign.

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