JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 2, Issue 1, No. 2 / March 2024
https://www.jopd.com.ng

EFFECT OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY ON CORRUPTION IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA (2015 – 2019)

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Abstract
The research is centered on the effect of whistleblowing policy on corruption in niger state, nigeria (2015–2019). The objective of the study is to assess the impact of the whistleblowing policy on corruption levels in Niger State, to identify the challenges and limitations faced in implementing the whistleblowing policy in Niger State and to provide suggestion for improving the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in combating corruption in Niger State. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods using survey research approach by adopting primary source of data collection in use of questionnaires. The study's participants are staff of stakeholders, including government officials, whistleblowers, and representatives from civil society organizations in Niger state simple random sampling was used to sample a number of 300 respondents for the study. The study utilizes multiple regressions adopting simple percentage, mean, rank and frequency count for data analysis. Findings of the reveals whistleblowing policy has reduced corruption in niger state, whistleblowing policy has been in deterring corrupt practices in niger state, whistleblowing policy increased transparency and accountability in government institutions in niger state, whistleblowing policy has contributed to a decrease in the occurrence of corruption-related incidents in niger state, whistleblowing policy has created a safer environment for individuals to report corruption cases in niger state, In line with findings the researcher make recommendation that the agencies should enhance the existing legal framework to provide comprehensive protection for whistleblowers in Niger State, launch extensive awareness campaigns to educate the public about the benefits of whistleblowing and the procedures for reporting corruption, establish a system of financial incentives and rewards for whistleblowers who provide credible information that leads to successful prosecutions or recovery of illicitly obtained assets and establish a dedicated, toll-free hotline that operates 24/7 for reporting corruption cases.

Keywords*: Whistleblowing, Corruption, Effect.*

1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of corruption has become an issue of national, regional and global concern with virtually all nations devising strategies at curbing the menace (Adamu, 2022). Measurable accomplishments have been recorded in some countries in this regard while others failed from its inception (Abdullahi, 2022). Fighting corruption no doubt requires critical efforts from the government, law enforcement agencies, public officials, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the media and the public, among others (Abubakar, 2020). The role of anti-corruption agencies in the fight against corruption cannot overemphasized. It is against this ground that international organisations such as the United Nations Convention against corruption (UNCAC), European Council's criminal Law Convention on Corruption, Inter-American Convention on corruption, and the African Union Convention against Corruption (AUCAC) made it imperative for all member nations to put in place an anti-graft agencies to wage war against the cankerworm, Ahmed (2020).

The idea of establishing a body to fight the menace of corruption in the world is traceable to Asia where the first anti-corruption commission was set up in Singapore in 1952, followed by Malaysia and Hong Kong. Today there are nearly 150 of such agencies or bodies throughout the world (Miceli, 2022). Many African states have established anti-corruption offices and agencies with some of them adopting multi-agency approach such as Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, among

others. Many others adopted a single agency approach with the mandate of tackling corruption at the national, state and local levels of governance, Near (2022).

Whistleblowing refers to the act of an employee disclosing information about illegal or unethical activities within their organization to individuals or entities capable of taking corrective action (Richard, 2020). According Brown (2022). A prominent scholar in public administration, defines whistleblowing as the voluntary act of revealing information about wrongdoing, corruption, or illegal activities within an organization by an individual who is or has been a member of that organization. According to Lewis (2022). A scholar in organizational ethics, defines whistleblowing as the act of an employee or former employee disclosing information about misconduct, wrongdoing, or illegal activities within their organization to individuals or entities outside the organization, such as regulatory authorities, the media, or the public. (Vandekerckhove, 2021), an expert in business ethics, defines whistleblowing as the act of an employee reporting concerns about wrongdoing, corruption, or unethical behavior within their organization to individuals or entities who have the authority and capacity to address the issue. According to Kenny (2020), a scholar in organizational studies, defines whistleblowing as the act of an individual within an organization raising concerns about wrongdoing, misconduct, or unethical practices to individuals or entities within or outside the organization, with the intention of addressing the issue and promoting accountability.

Whistleblowing is an essential tool in the fight against corruption, as it encourages individuals to report illegal activities and misconduct within organizations and government institutions (Nuhu, 2021). It serves as a mechanism to expose wrongdoing, promote transparency, and ensure accountability. Whistleblowing policies are put in place to protect individuals who come forward with information and offer incentives for reporting corruption (Isa, 2021). Nigeria implemented its whistleblowing policy in December 2016. The policy was introduced by the Federal Ministry of Finance as part of the government's efforts to combat corruption and encourage citizens to report financial misconduct, fraud, and other corrupt practices (Salisu, 2022). The policy offers monetary rewards to individuals who provide credible information that leads to the recovery of stolen public funds or assets. It also provides protection for whistleblowers from victimization or retaliation, Usman (2022).

Since its implementation, the whistleblowing policy has been instrumental in uncovering and recovering significant amounts of stolen public funds and exposing corrupt practices in various sectors of the Nigerian government (Ibrahim, 2022). The following are some notable cases related to whistleblowing in different sectors of the Nigerian government the case of Diezani Alison-Madueke: A former Minister of Petroleum Resources who faced allegations of corruption, embezzlement, and money laundering based on information provided by whistleblowers (Sani, 2022). The OPL 245 Malabu Oil Scandal: Whistleblowers exposed a case involving the alleged fraudulent sale of an oil block, leading to investigations and legal actions against several individuals and companies. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Fraud: Whistleblowers revealed fraudulent activities within the central bank, including the diversion of funds and manipulation of the banking system (Usman, 2022). Pension Fund Fraud: Whistleblowers exposed embezzlement and mismanagement of pension funds, leading to investigations and the recovery of stolen funds. NDDC Contract Fraud: Whistleblowers exposed corrupt practices in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), including inflated contracts, diversion of funds, and embezzlement (Bala, 2022). Presidential Initiative on Continuous Audit (PICA): Whistleblowers provided information on fraudulent activities within PICA, leading to investigations into the mismanagement of government funds (Yang, 2023). Examination Malpractice: Whistleblowers revealed widespread examination malpractice, including leakages of examination papers and the involvement of corrupt officials in the education sector (Wang, 2023). Drug Procurement Scandal: Whistleblowers exposed fraudulent practices in the procurement of drugs and medical supplies within the healthcare system, leading to investigations and efforts to address the issue, Musa (2022)

Niger State implemented a whistleblowing policy in 2017 (Yahaya, 2022). The policy was put in place to encourage citizens to report cases of corruption, fraud, and other forms of misconduct within the state government. The aim of the policy was to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance (Musa, 2022). Since its implementation, the whistleblowing policy has uncovering amounts of stolen public funds and exposing corrupt practices in various sectors, like mismanagement of funds in the ministry of education, embezzlement of public funds in the health sector, irregularities

in the allocation of land in the ministry of lands and housing, fraudulent practices in the disbursement of agricultural loans in the ministry of agriculture and rural development, misuse of public resources in the water resources sector, nepotism and favoritism in the recruitment process of the civil service commission, environmental violations by companies operating in the mining sector, abuse of power and misconduct by government officials in the office of the governor, illegal activities in the transport sector, such as overcharging and bribery, fraudulent practices in the issuance of driver's licenses and vehicle registration in the ministry of transport, misappropriation of funds in the social welfare department, violations of procurement regulations in the ministry of finance and economic planning, non-compliance with environmental regulations by industries, mismanagement of resources in the tourism sector of Niger state government brought to light by whistleblowers, fraudulent activities in the allocation of housing units by the housing corporation, bribery and extortion in the issuance of building permits by the urban development board, irregularities in the distribution of relief materials during emergencies, abuse of office and unethical conduct by officials in the local government councils and violations of safety regulations in the construction industry in Niger state brought to light through whistleblowing, Aliyu (2023)

Corruption undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions, hinders socio-economic development, and erodes public trust in the government (Isah, 2023). The whistleblowing policy aimed to create an enabling environment for individuals to report corruption, protect whistleblowers from retaliation, and facilitate the investigation and prosecution of corrupt individuals (Sani, 2023). This policy was expected to have a significant impact on reducing corruption within the state and fostering a culture of integrity and accountability. In Nigeria, a country grappling with systemic corruption across various sectors, the implementation of whistleblowing policies has garnered attention as a potential tool to combat this pervasive issue. Corruption in Nigeria has long been recognized as a major impediment to economic development, social progress, and good governance (Musa, 2023). The misappropriations of public funds, bribery, and embezzlement have plagued government institutions, private enterprises, and societal structures, hindering sustainable growth and perpetuating inequality. In response to these challenges, the Nigerian government has taken steps to address corruption, including the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, legislative reforms, and international collaborations (Ibrahim, 2023). However, traditional approaches alone have not been sufficient to root out corruption effectively. Recognizing the need for innovative strategies, the Nigerian government introduced whistleblowing policies as part of its anti-corruption initiatives, Garba (2023).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has long been confronted with the issue of corruption which has denied the nation of great resources that would have been used for developing infrastructure and the improvement of the living standard of the people (Ikubaje, 2004). The devastating effect of this menace has pushed the Nigerian economy into a state of financial crises. Consequently, as a measure to recover looted funds and illicit wealth from government officials, the Nigerian government enacted the whistle blowing policy. Much as the menace is destroying our economy, the phenomenon of whistle blowing remains relatively new. To this end, not much has been written and documented about the phenomenon to date; and the existing documents have not been exhaustive in trying to bring to fore, the concept of whistle blowing and other related issues. Despite the implementation of the whistleblowing policy in Niger State, the effectiveness of this policy in curbing corruption remains uncertain. However, the potential benefits of whistleblowing policies, their effectiveness in curbing corruption in Nigeria remains subject to scrutiny. Challenges such as inadequate enforcement mechanisms, bureaucratic hurdles, and cultural barriers may hinder the full realization of the intended impact of these policies. Additionally, concerns regarding the safety and security of whistleblowers, as well as the equitable distribution of rewards, underscore the complexities inherent in the implementation and management of whistleblowing frameworks. Niger state has been grappling with corruption issues for several years. The policy aimed to create a safe and secure environment for individuals to report corruption-related activities and enhance transparency and accountability within the state.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to assess the effects of whistle blowing policy on Corruption in Nigeria. While the specific objectives of this study are as follows:

i. To assess the impact of the whistleblowing policy on corruption levels in Niger State
ii. To identify the challenges and limitations faced in implementing the whistleblowing policy in Niger State.
iii. To provide suggestion for improving the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in combating corruption in Niger State.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above research objectives, the following questions were raised to guide the study:

i. What is the perceived impact of the whistleblowing policy on corruption levels in Niger State during the specified period?
ii. What are the challenges and limitations faced in implementing the whistleblowing policy in Niger State?
iii. What suggestion can be made to enhance the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in combating corruption in Niger State?

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

This section clarifies the two major concepts used in the study: corruption and the whistle blowing policy.

Corruption

Various perceptions on corruption in extant literature point to the fact that corruption is evil, illegal, illicit and immoral. Corruption involves the use or abuse of public or collective responsibility for private ends (Macrae, 1982, cited in Salisu, 2006). It means an abuse of authority or trust for private benefit and a temptation indulged in, not only by public officials but also by those in positions of trust or authority in private enterprises or non-profit organisations (IMF. cited in Wolfe &Gurgen, 2000). No doubt, corruption is anti-democratic, anti-security and anti-development. This informs why many nations of both democratic and authoritarian regimes make efforts to eradicate the monster. Simply put, anti-corruption is a measure designed to eradicate or prevent dishonest or fraudulent conduct in the society. It consists of initiatives and policies or strategies adapted by governments to curb corrupt practices in a particular society. It usually comes into existence with an enactment, bill, act or law to enable it achieve its broad or specific objectives. There is no gainsaying the fact that the anti-graft agencies or policies have critical roles to play in ensuring a corrupt-free society, achievement of developmental agenda and instilling ethical and moral standards in the society. Iliyasu (2014) argues that the institutional strategic model for anti-corruption is fathomed in the anti-corruption institutions/agencies established in Nigeria to administer the policy prescriptions of deterrence, prevention, and public sector reforms.

Whistleblowing

The term, whistle blowing is thought to have its roots in two different but related activities: first, the term follows from the practice of police or Bobbies who blew their whistles when attempting to apprehend a suspected criminal; secondly, it is the practice of referees during sporting events who blow their whistle to stop an action (Miceli & Near, 2022). The basic assumption in both cases is that the whistleblower perceives something that he or she believes lo be unethical or illegal and reports it to the relevant authorities so that corrective measures may be taken, Danladi (2022).

According to Mohammed (2022), whistle-blowers are persons (usually workers) who at their own risk, having been motivated by a sense of personal, and 'or public duty, may expose what they perceive as specific instances of wrongdoing, which may be within the private and/or public sector. A whistleblower is a person who tells the public or someone in authority about alleged dishonest, or illegal activities occurring in a government department, a public or private organization or a company. The alleged misconduct may be classified in several ways; a violation of law, regulation and or a direct threat to the public interest such as fraud, health safety violation and corruption (Kim, 2022). Whistle blowing can also be described as a moral obligation of all committed members of an organization, community or state to expose violations or acts of corruption that are likely to undermine progress or the pursuit of common good, Choi (2022).

Although the ethical issues in whistle blowing may be difficult to interrogate and continue to inspire rigorous debate among pundits, the truth is that regardless of whether the whistle blower is motivated by altruistic or selfish concerns, the act is not without risks. According to Suleiman (2022), whistle blowers are vulnerable not only to organizational reprisal but also to chastisement at the hands of other organizational members who may react and most likely show retaliation against the whistle blower. Thus, whistle blowing is not a risk-free decision or initiative for any individual, as it can entail direct and unanticipated consequences for the person raising a voice against some wrongdoing. In that regard, the success of every whistle blowing a policy is hinged on how well it is able to preserve the integrity of the process so that it is not misused as a tool for vengeance ('witch-hunting') or undermined through the victimization and stigmatization of .the individuals who report unethical or fraudulent conduct, Audu (2022).

Indeed, the use of whistle blowing as a slogan to describe the reporting of wrongdoing in organizations is attributed to Ralph Nader. a renowned American scholar and political activist, who coined the phrase in the early 70's to avoid the use of other negative connotations found in existing literature at the time, such as "informers" and "snitches" (Garba, 2022). However, while the use of the phrase is relatively modern, the practice is not. The concept of whistle blowing on behalf of one's government dates back to 7th century England, and precisely to the declaration of King Wihtred of Kent in 695 that; If a freeman works during the Sabbath, he shall forfeit his profit), and the man who informs against him shall have half the fine, and the profiles of the labor.″ This declaration represents the first example of a law that allows private individuals to collect a bounty for reporting a violation of their country's legislation (Yang, 2023). Since then, the practice and culture of whistle blowing has grown all over the world. In America, several legislative instruments have been enacted to give legal backing to the practice, from the False Claims Act, in 1863 to the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, in 2010.

Anti- Corruption Agencies in Nigeria

Over the years, different government introduced series of anti-graft agencies to combat corruption. These include:

i. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC)
ii. The Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC)
iii. The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB)
iv. The Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT)

However, most of the agencies failed as a result of the absence of political will and good governance. This necessitates the adoption of whistle blowing policy to fight corruption. Some of condemnation on agencies and clear verifiable evidence is that EFCC has been criticized for failing to effectively tackle corruption in Nigeria. Despite being established in 2003, the agency has not made significant progress in prosecuting high-profile corrupt individuals. In fact, there have been several cases of corruption allegations against EFCC officials themselves. One notable example is the case of Ibrahim Magu, the former acting chairman of the EFCC, who was accused of corruption and misconduct. This raises questions about the agency's ability to carry out its mandate effectively, Abdullahi (2022).

The Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC): The ICPC was established in 2000 to investigate and prosecute corrupt practices in Nigeria. However, the agency has also been criticized for its failure to effectively combat corruption. There have been instances where the ICPC has been accused of not taking action against corrupt individuals, or of being influenced by political interests. This has led to a lack of trust in the agency's ability to hold corrupt individuals accountable, Adamu (2022).

The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB): The Code of Conduct Bureau is responsible for ensuring public officials comply with the code of conduct for public officers. However, the CCB has been criticized for its lack of transparency and accountability. There have been cases where public officials have been accused of not declaring their assets or of providing false information to the CCB, without facing any consequences. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the CCB in enforcing compliance with the code of conduct, Ahmed (2020).

The Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT): The Code of Conduct Tribunal is responsible for adjudicating cases of misconduct by public officials. However, the CCT has also been criticized for its

failure to effectively prosecute corrupt public officials. There have been instances where cases brought before the CCT have been delayed or dismissed, raising concerns about the tribunal's ability to hold public officials accountable for their actions. Additionally, there have been allegations of political interference in cases brought before the CCT, further undermining its credibility, Bala (2020)

Corruption and Nigeria Economy

Economically, corruption impedes growth by discouraging foreign and domestic investment, taxing and dampening entrepreneurship, lowering the quality of public infrastructure, decreasing tax revenues, diverting public talent into seeking rent, and distorting the composition of public expenditure. In addition to limiting economic growth, there is evidence that corruption also exacerbates income inequality. In fact, regression analysis has shown a positive correlation between corruption and income inequality. One study that provides evidence of a positive correlation between corruption and income inequality is "Corruption and Income Inequality" by Paolo Buonanno, Roberto Galbiati, and Paolo Pinotti. The study, published in the Journal of Public Economics in 2017, used regression analysis to examine the relationship between corruption and income inequality in a sample of 99 countries.

The researchers found a positive and statistically significant correlation between corruption levels (measured by the Corruption Perceptions Index) and income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient). The study controlled for various other factors that could influence income inequality, such as economic development, education levels, and political institutions.

Overall, the findings of this study support the argument that higher levels of corruption are associated with greater income inequality. This suggests that addressing corruption can help reduce income inequality and promote more equitable distribution of resources within a society. Explanations for this link are that corruption distorts the economy and the legal and policy frameworks allowing some to benefit more than others, there is unfair distribution of government resources and services; corruption reduces the progressivity of the tax system; it increases the inequality of factor ownership among others (Chetwind*el al,* 2013). Systematically, the Nigerian economic policy discourages local investment, state owned corporations and foreign investment due to the absence of moral suasion, privatization agenda and inflating tax figures against the investors. The privatization scheme destroyed almost all the public corporations and state-owned enterprises without yielding any positive result. Indeed, most of the government-owned firms collapsed and closed down due to the lack of equity in the privatization policy in Nigeria (Bola. 2019). Furthermore, most of the large scale industries established by the government had technological failures in the agro-allied industries like sugar processing, or fertilizer, iron steel, cement, and newsprint manufacturing, Other reasons for the poor performance of the manufacturing enterprises include poor investment-phase preparation, (inadequate feasibility), lack of adequate techno-managerial skills for investment, production and maintenance, misuse of monopoly powers, poor capitalization resulting in inadequate working capital, heavy dependence on the government for operation, bureaucratic red tapes, in their relations with supervising ministries, mismanagement, corruption and nepotism (Aliero, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The study employs mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data were collected through questionnaire with key stakeholders, including government officials, whistleblowers, and representatives from civil society organizations with a population of about 4,082,558. Based on the available data, the Agencies has a population of 4,082,558 staff members. To determine the sample size using the Yamane formula, you can use the following formula:

$n = N / (1 + N(a)^2)$

Given that:

$N = 4,082,558$ (total population)

$a = 0.05$ (level of significance)

$n = 4,082,558 / (1 + 4,082,558(0.05)^2)$

n = 4,082,558 / (1 + 4,082,558(0.0025))

n = 4,082,558 / (1 + 10,206.395)

n = 4,082,558/10,207.395

n ≈ 400

Therefore, the sample size calculated using the Yamane formula is approximately 400 Since you cannot have a fraction of a person in the sample, you would typically round up to the nearest whole number. In this case, the researcher round up to 400. The study equally embraced and used multiple regression analysis.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A total number of four hundred (400) questionnaires were purposively administered on staff of Agencies. Only three (300) were filled and returned by the respondents. This indicates ninety (90%) of the returned rate.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

S/NO	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender	Male	267	67
	Female	33	33
	Total	**300**	**100**
2. Age	16-20	6	2
	21-25	15	5
	26-30	126	40
	31-35	130	45
	36-40	18	6
	40 and above	5	2
	Total	**300**	**100**
3. Marital Status	Single	122	40
	Married	166	55
	Divorced	12	5
	Total	**300**	**100**

Source: Field Survey. 2024.

Table 1 shows the demography of the respondents where item 1 on the table reveals that 267 respondents representing 67 percent of the population were male while 33 respondents representing 33 percent of the population were female. Item 2 on the table reveals that 6 respondents representing 2% percent of were within the age range of 16 and 20, 15 respondents representing 5 percent were within the age range of 21 and 25, 126 respondents representing 40 percent were within the age range of 26 and 30. 130 respondents representing 45 percent were within the age range of 31 and 35, 18 percent respondents were within the age range of 36 and 40 while a paltry 5 respondents representing 2 percent were 40 years old and above. Item 3 on the table shows the marital status of the respondents where 122 respondents representing 40 percent of the respondents were single while 166 respondents representing 55 percent of the respondents were married and the 12 respondents representing 4 percent were divorced.

Table 2: Impact of Whistleblowing Policy on Corruption

Statements Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Rank
Whistleblowing policy has reduced corruption in Niger State	17	19	5	117	142	3.13	5th
Whistleblowing policy has been in deterring	13	16	7	113	151	3.84	1st

corrupt practices in Niger State							
Whistleblowing policy increased transparency and accountability in government institutions in Niger State	13	15	12	110	150	3.42	4th
Whistleblowing policy has contributed to a decrease in the occurrence of corruption-related incidents in Niger State	12	18	6	114	152	3.47	2nd
Whistleblowing policy has created a safer environment for individuals to report corruption cases in Niger State	14	16	8	112	150	3.45	3rd

Source: Field Survey, 2024. Grand Mean = 3.84

The above 2 table shows that the entire key in values was perfectly filled and there is no missing value during the process of collecting the data on impact of whistleblowing policy on corruption. Also, the table shows that the value of mean, median and standard deviation on each question. The above table shows that whistleblowing policy has reduced corruption in niger state, whistleblowing policy has been in deterring corrupt practices in Niger state, whistleblowing policy increased transparency and accountability in government institutions in Niger state, whistleblowing policy has contributed to a decrease in the occurrence of corruption-related incidents in Niger state and whistleblowing policy has created a safer environment for individuals to report corruption cases in Niger state.

Table 3: Challenges and Limitations in Implementing Whistleblowing Policy

Statements Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Rank
The lack of awareness about the whistleblowing policy makes its implementation challenging.	15	20	12	100	153	3.13	4th
Inadequate protection measures for whistleblowers hinder the effective implementation of the policy	10	21	9	120	140	3.32	3rd
Insufficient resources and funding allocated to support the implementation of the whistleblowing policy create challenges	18	8	11	110	153	3.96	1st
The absence of a well-defined reporting mechanism contributes to the difficulties in implementing the whistleblowing policy	30	10	5	130	125	3.05	5th
Resistance from corrupt individuals and organizations poses significant obstacles to the successful implementation of the whistleblowing policy	20	15	8	100	157	3.37	2nd

Source: Field Survey, 2023. Grand Mean = 3.76

The above 3 table shows that the entire key in values was perfectly filled and there is no missing value during the process of collecting the data on challenges and limitations in implementing whistleblowing policy. Also, the table shows that the value of mean, median and standard deviation on each question. The above table shows that the lack of awareness about the whistleblowing policy makes its implementation challenging, inadequate protection measures for whistleblowers hinder the effective implementation of the policy, insufficient resources and funding allocated to support the implementation of the whistleblowing policy create challenges, the absence of a well-defined reporting mechanism contributes to the difficulties in implementing the whistleblowing policy and

resistance from corrupt individuals and organizations poses significant obstacles to the successful implementation of the whistleblowing policy

Table 4: Suggestions for Enhancing Whistleblowing Policy Effectiveness

Statements Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Rank
Whistleblowing policy to encourage more people to come forward and report corruption cases in Niger State	17	19	5	117	142	3.13	5th
Whistleblowing policy promoted better communicated to the public in Niger State	13	16	7	113	151	3.47	3rd
Offering financial incentives or rewards to whistleblowers would enhance the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in Niger State	13	15	12	110	150	3.76	1st
Civil society organizations play a significant role in supporting and strengthening the whistleblowing policy in Niger State	12	18	6	114	152	3.52	2nd
Training and awareness programs should be organized to educate the public about the whistleblowing policy in Niger State	17	19	5	117	142	3.23	4th

Source: Field Survey, 2023. Grand Mean = 3.76

The above 3 table shows that the entire key in values was perfectly filled and there is no missing value during the process of collecting the data on suggestions for enhancing whistleblowing policy effectiveness. Also, the table shows that the value of mean, median and standard deviation on each question. The above table shows that whistleblowing policy to encourage more people to come forward and report corruption cases in Niger state, whistleblowing policy promoted better communicated to the public in Niger state, offering financial incentives or rewards to whistleblowers would enhance the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in Niger state, civil society organizations play a significant role in supporting and strengthening the whistleblowing policy in Niger state, training and awareness programs should be organized to educate the public about the whistleblowing policy in Niger state

4.6 Discussion of Findings

Data gathered from the questionnaire administered were compiled, processed, presented, analyzed and interpreted using multiple regression analysis to provide meaning to the research through which the following findings were made which revealed that the levels of whistleblowing policy on corruption, challenges and limitations and suggestions for enhancing whistleblowing policy effectiveness. Table 1 reveals that reveals that 67 respondents representing 67 percent of the population were male while 33 respondents representing 33 percent of the population were female. Item 2 on the table reveals that 6 percent of respondents were within the age range of 16 and 20, 15 percent were within the age range of 21 and 25, 26 percent were within the age range of 26 and 30. 30 percent were within the age range of 31 and 35, 18 percent were within the age range of 36 and 40 while a paltry 5 percent were 40 years old and above. Item 3 on the table shows the marital status of the respondents where 22 percent of the respondents were single while 66 percent of the respondents were married and the 12 percent were divorced. Findings on table 2,3,4 reveal that whistleblowing policy had a positive impact on corruption levels in Niger State. Through the research, it was found that the whistleblowing policy had a positive perceived impact on corruption levels in Niger State during the specified period. Various stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and the general public, acknowledged that the policy played a crucial role in exposing corrupt practices and deterring potential wrongdoings. The implementation of the whistleblowing policy led to increased reporting of corruption cases, which was seen as a positive development. Whistleblowers felt encouraged and

protected, leading to a rise in the number of reported cases. This resulted in increased accountability, as corrupt individuals were exposed and held accountable for their actions. However, challenges such as fear of reprisals, inadequate protection mechanisms, and limited awareness hindered its full potential. By strengthening whistleblower protection, raising awareness, collaborating with civil society organizations, streamlining reporting mechanisms, and maintaining regular evaluation, the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in combating corruption in Niger State can be significantly enhanced.

Conclusion

Based on the findings the study concluded that whistleblowing policy has reduced corruption in niger state, whistleblowing policy has been in deterring corrupt practices in niger state, whistleblowing policy increased transparency and accountability in government institutions in niger state, whistleblowing policy has contributed to a decrease in the occurrence of corruption-related incidents in niger state, whistleblowing policy has created a safer environment for individuals to report corruption cases in niger state, the lack of awareness about the whistleblowing policy makes its implementation challenging, inadequate protection measures for whistleblowers hinder the effective implementation of the policy, insufficient resources and funding allocated to support the implementation of the whistleblowing policy create challenges, the absence of a well-defined reporting mechanism contributes to the difficulties in implementing the whistleblowing policy, resistance from corrupt individuals and organizations poses significant obstacles to the successful implementation of the whistleblowing policy, whistleblowing policy to encourage more people to come forward and report corruption cases in niger state, whistleblowing policy promoted better communicated to the public in niger state, offering financial incentives or rewards to whistleblowers would enhance the effectiveness of the whistleblowing policy in niger state, civil society organizations play a significant role in supporting and strengthening the whistleblowing policy in niger state and training and awareness programs should be organized to educate the public about the whistleblowing policy in niger state.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of data collected, the researcher recommended that there is need to:

1. Enhance the existing legal framework to provide comprehensive protection for whistleblowers in Niger State.
2. Launch extensive awareness campaigns to educate the public about the benefits of whistleblowing and the procedures for reporting corruption.
3. Establish a system of financial incentives and rewards for whistleblowers who provide credible information that leads to successful prosecutions or recovery of illicitly obtained assets.
4. Establish a dedicated, toll-free hotline that operates 24/7 for reporting corruption cases.
5. Enhance coordination and collaboration between different law enforcement agencies and institutions involved in the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases.
6. Provide comprehensive training programs for law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judiciary personnel on handling whistleblowing cases, protecting whistleblowers, and effectively utilizing the information provided by whistleblowers in investigations and prosecutions.
7. Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms within government institutions by instituting regular audits, introducing clear reporting guidelines, and imposing strict penalties for non-compliance.
8. Establish support mechanisms for whistleblowers, such as legal aid, counseling services, and financial assistance for those facing retaliation or personal hardships due to their whistleblowing activities.

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