
SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MEANS OF ERADICATING
CORRUPTION IN THE PUBLIC SECTORS IN NIGERIA

— — — — —

OLASOJI, Ezekiel Olaposi

*Department of Social Sciences Education
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

Abstract

This paper examines how the social media are a veritable tool for corruption eradication in the public sectors in Nigeria. In doing this, the study looked at the social media, its ubiquitous nature and how it has turned the whole world into a global village. Also, the study introduced a new perspective on the roles of the social media as preventive measures to corruption in the public sectors of the economy with reference to Ogbomoso metropolis of Oyo State. Data were drawn through researcher's designed questionnaires on the public perceptions and the level of corruption among the public officials and political office holders. Data were analysed using frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation statistics. The result showed that the social media usage makes a larger audience to expose the victims of extortive corruption and act as external controls to reduce the cost of fighting corruption in several ways and to eradicate the level of the endemic social vices in the society. The paper recommends that people should be educated on how the social media can be used effectively to serve as tools to check arbitrary use of power by public officers who rake in public funds to personal use.

Keywords: *Social Media, Corruption eradication, public sectors, EFCC and ICPC*

Introduction

Nigerian society today is faced with so many social problems. Many of these social problems are virtually non-existent in some years past. The occurrence and untold effects of these social problems have been a source of concern to the government and to every responsible citizen of the country. They have therefore, become serious social issues that require urgent and concerted efforts of all stake holders. The more Nigeria is graduating from settling one problem, the more it opened another one. Ismaheel (2016) opined in a lecture delivered on the defence of human rights that political corruption is a persistent phenomenon that has overridden other corrupt practices in other spheres of life. Corruption occurs basically in four major forms: bribery (kickback, pay-off), embezzlement (when disloyal employees steal from their employers), Fraud (manipulation of information by public officers for their own profit) and extortion (use of force to get money from people) (Andvig & John, 2000). Almost 65% of the Nigerian population engage in one form of corruption or the other such as politicians, police, lecturers, civil servants, journalists, lawyers, judges, law makers and the likes, this has led citizens to be wallowing in abject poverty (Akani, 2015). With the rapid development of social media (Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Goggle+ , LinkedIn etc.) networks across all countries of the world today, many people are now aware of the current situation of their countries, united on a huge platform to discuss contemporary social issues bothering their minds in all spheres of life, share information which may pose threats to them and reporting cases of corruption. The persistence of corruption as a social problem in Nigeria has led to poverty, unemployment and reduced the social economic value and prevented people from enjoying the dividend of democracy in Nigeria (Rotimi & Obasaju, 2013). Social media as veritable tools have made people to contribute their quota for the development of their own country.

It is generally acknowledged that corrupt practices are endemic in both public and private sectors in Nigeria and reduce the country's

integrity and security. It also poses serious developmental challenges which in turn are responsible for the low standard of living of the populace. Public resources meant for the development of the nation are embezzled by few people and the populace become demoralized and subjected to unprecedented sufferings (Andersen & Udo, 2011). In Nigeria, corruption ranges from petty to grand corruption. Petty corruption can be described as street level of corruption, which occurs when citizens interact with low-to-mid- level public officials in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other bureaucratic agencies. On the other hand, grand corruption involves corruption that takes place at the policy formulation level (where policies and rules may be unjustly influenced) it is usually in large scale and sometimes used synonymously with political corruption (U4 – Anti-Corruption Resource Center, Glossary). The World Bank according to Akintola (2014) put corruption at over \$1 trillion per year accounting for up to 12% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nations like Nigeria, Kenya and Venezuela.

Corruption manifests itself in Nigeria in form of abuse of positions and privileges, low levels of transparency and accountability, inflation of contracts awards, bribery, kickbacks, misappropriation or diversion of funds, under and over-invoicing, false declarations, advance fee fraud and other deceptive schemes known as “419” (Obayelu, 2007). In 2013, the EFCC recorded 117 convictions ranging from one year imprisonment to other jail term, and a refund of huge sum of money. This increased to 126 in 2014 (EFCC Records, 2013/2014 Conviction). Between December 2014 and February 2015, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) handled a total of 54 cases on corrupt practices (ICPC News, The nation Newspaper, January, 2015).

On the other hand, an investigation panel headed by Air Vice Marshal O.N. Ode (Rtd) which looked at arms procurement between 2007 and 2015, discovered that the former National Security Adviser (NSA) to former President Goodluck Jonathan, Col. Sambo Dasuki and others allegedly awarded contracts of more than ₦3.8 billion and shared about ₦2.1 billion to party leaders in Nigeria (The Nation Newspaper, December 2, 2015). Through the panel’s investigative

report, the people became aware of the details of the arms scam. The money shared was meant to buy weapons for the fight against Boko Haram (The Nation Newspaper, 2016). This Day Newspaper of May 23, 2016 also revealed that the Federal High Court had asked the former Minister of Finance, Okonjo Iweala to account for the N30 trillion that missed in the country's account within four years. The N 2. 1billion that was allegedly paid to party leaders was also brought to the public domain by the Media (The Nation Newspaper, March 5, 2016) and spread later through the social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, linkedIn, Wikipedia Goggle, Goggle+ , You-tube, among others). An analysis of the anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the law because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences, that is why the general populace need to be involved in other to expose their nefarious attitude through the social media (Rotimi & Obasaju, 2013).

In 2012, Transparency International again affirmed that Nigeria is one of the most corrupt nations in the world. That year, the country ranked 139th out of 176 surveyed countries, making Nigeria the 37th most corrupt nation (Uzochukwu, 2013). In 2013, Nigeria ranked 144 out of 177 countries surveyed in term of transparency. The score made Nigeria 33rd most corrupt country in the world that year. The result published by the organization also showed that Nigeria scored 25% out of 100 in terms of transparency. In the 2014 ranking, Nigeria is ranked 136 out of 174 countries surveyed (Transparency International, 2014). The result shows that it is still better than before, but things are still bad. Nigeria was the 38th most corrupt country in the world in 2014.

With a change in administration in the year 2015, many Nigerians were eagerly expecting a drastic event of change that will combat corruption. Irrespective of their promises, Nigeria ranked low in transparency and high in corruption in the year 2015, as out of 168 countries surveyed, Nigeria was seen at the bottom of the table - she was in the 136th position. This was the evidence that Nigeria was the 32nd most corrupt country in the world in 2015. Out of 176 countries and territories surveyed in the 2016 year index, Nigeria fell below the midpoint of transparency. Nigeria was 136 on the table with Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Myanmar, and

Papua New Guinea. From the analysis, it shows that Nigeria and the countries mentioned were ranked 40th most corrupt in 2016. From the foregoing analysis, it can be deduced that corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria's economy. This has subjected some people into a lot of pains as the money which would have been used to reduce poverty in the country is channelled into the pockets of a group of persons. Therefore, one potent tool in this regard is the use of Social Media.

Social media has been recognized as a medium in which people communicate and interact. It makes people share ideas, pictures, opinions, increasing their participation in political process, entertain with movies and gain access to information in any field of endeavours. Social Media platform has brought about remarkable and unprecedented opportunities for many countries in the world out of which Nigeria, the 'giant of Africa' is not exempted (Diamond, 2010; Saleh, 2012). The emergence of social media started in the early days of the internet when people began to share information and communicate with one another (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). But unfortunately, the platforms used then were more '*technology intensive*' and required some levels of expertise before use.

Over a period of time, as technology advanced, platforms that are less sophisticated were developed; thus enabling billions of regular internet users, without any technical background, to use the services through mobile phone, laptop, palmtop and other technology devices (Boyd, 2010). This was the genesis of a turning point in the history of the internet, as people no longer remain silent spectators to the current political contents being dished out to them. They could create their own contents, share their ideas with others, respond to people's opinion, collaborate with them and many more (Andreas & Haenlein, 2010). To support this finding, Benjamin and Ifediora (2014) revealed that the concept of an online association and interaction through social media is a group of people who regularly interact online, share ideas, common values and expose the nefarious attitude of the public office holders toward corruption in line with the norm of the society. Charles and Whaler (2014) argued that a free access to the social media as a medium of communication and information reduces the cost of fighting corruption in a country.

Ponco (2016) claimed that larger access of the people to social media would mean a larger audience to organise a public rally or protest against the perpetrators of corruption in the society.

By and large, many researchers such as Andersen (2011), Benjamin and Ifediora (2014), Charles and Whaler (2014), Ponco and Azman (2016) had investigated on the importance of the social media as a channel of communication. However, few or none of them has worked on how it can be used as a means of corruption eradication in Nigeria. Some of the researchers that had worked on the perception of people on corruption used International World Bank corruption perception index to analyse the data collected. Also, it was also revealed that the social media can be used for many purposes in order to add more values to the individual and the entire nation. Therefore, this present study sought to investigate how the social media are a veritable tool for corruption eradication in the public sectors in Nigeria, putting the individual's perception and experience in petty and grand corruption into consideration.

Objectives of the study

This study sought to:

- i. investigate the possible contribution of the social media as external controls of corruption in the public sectors in Nigeria;
- ii. examine how the social media can reduce the cost of fighting corruption in Nigeria: and
- iii. assess the perception of the people towards corruption in public sectors and how the spread of social media will create awareness for the populace in Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated to guide the study:

- i. What are the ways in which the social media can contribute to corruption eradication in public sectors in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the perception of the social media patronage towards the possible eradication of corruption in the public sectors in Nigeria through Social Media?

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design to collect data from the respondents drawn from the public sectors in Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 150 respondents selected through systematic random sampling technique in Ogbomosho metropolis covering Ogbomosho North and South Local Government of Oyo state. The respondents were civil servants, traders, undergraduates, drivers and artisans. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire tagged ‘Social Media and Corruption Eradication Questionnaire’. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. A mean value of 1.50 was set as criterion mean, therefore, any mean less than 1.50 was considered not significant and any mean above 1.50 was considered significant.

Results

Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Civil servant	50	33.3
Traders	20	13.3
Artisans	20	13.3
Undergraduate	50	33.3
Drivers	10	6.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2017

From Table 1, 50 that is 33.3% of the respondents are civil servant and students, 20 i.e 13.3% are artisans and traders while the remaining respondents are drivers (10) i.e 6.7% of the respondents. It can be deduced that more civil servants and under graduate used social media (Facebook, Whatsapp, You tube, Wikipedia, Google+ etc.) to chart and share information compared to others in public sector of the economy.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	90	60.0
Female	60	40.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey Data, 2017.

Table 2 shows that male category has 90, (60%) which means that male used Social media more than female, which takes 60, (40%) of the respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17 – 24	25	16.7
25 – 34	55	36.7
35 – 44	50	33.3
45 – 54	15	10
55 – 64	05	3.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2017.

Table 3 revealed that the respondents that normally use social media to discuss contemporary social issues such as corruption in Nigeria are aged 25 and 44 (36.7% and 33.3 %) respectively and majority of them are working class of the public sector in Nigeria.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	104	69.3
Islam	44	29.3
Traditional	2	1.4
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey Data, 2017.

From Table 4, the analysis indicates that the respondents belong to one religion or the other but Christians dominates other religions with 104 (69.3%) and Islam has 44 (29.3%) while Traditional are 2 (1.4%).

Table 5: Social Media Contribution to Corruption Eradication in Nigeria

S/N	Social media tools for corruption eradication	Respondents view					Percentage (%)				
		SA	A	SD	D	Total	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1.	Free access to internet facilities	99	49	1	1	150	66	32.7	0.6	0.6	100
2.	Formation of Social media group	94	51	3	2	150	62.6	34	2	1.34	100
3.	Value re-orientation and moral teaching	105	45	0	0	150	70	30	0	0	100
4.	Adequate funding of anti-graft agencies	96	51	3	0	150	64	33	2	0	100
5.	Public officers should be more transparent in their duties	98	46	4	2	150	65.3	30.7	2.7	1.34	100
6.	Immunity of the political office holder should be withdrawn	108	39	2	1	150	72	26	1.34	0.67	100

Source: Field Survey Data, 2017.

From Table 5, items 1 – 6 have (98.7%) (96.6%) (99.4) which indicate that if many people can have free access to the internet facilities, involving in Social media group, having value reorientation, adequate funding of anti-graft agencies and transparency of the public officers which could also be learnt through the Social media, corruption will be eradicated in Nigeria.

What are the Ways in which Social Media Contribute to the Corruption Eradication in Nigeria?

Table 6: Analysis of research question 1

S/N	Items	No.	Positive Response (%)	Negative Response (%)	Mean	STD Dev.
1.	Free access to internet facilities	150	148(98.7)	02(1.3)	1.47	.53
2.	Formation of Social Media Group	150	145(96.6)	05(3.4)	1.56	.56
3.	Value reorientation and moral teaching through social media	150	149(99.4)	01(0.6)	1.44	.51

Average mean = 1.49

From Table 6, Items 1 – 3 show the positive view of the respondents on the ways in which social media contribute to corruption eradication. These are (98.7%) (96.6%) (99.4%) and negative reaction of the respondents are (1.3%) (3.4%) (0.6%) as well as mean and standard deviation of (1.47), (.53), (1.56), (.56), (1.44), and (.51) respectively, which are less than criterion mean. This implies that social media can contribute to the corruption eradication in Nigeria. If people gain access to the conditions listed in the items.

What is the perception of social media patronage towards the possible eradication of corruption in the public sectors in Nigeria through socialization?

Table 7: Analysis of research question 2

S/N	Items	No.	Positive Response (%)	Negative Response (%)	Mean	STD Dev.
1.	Adequate funding and equipment for anti-graft agencies	150	147(98.0)	03(2.0)	1.50	.54
2.	Public officers should be more transparent in their duties	150	144(96.0)	06(4.0)	1.69	.55
3.	Immunity of the political office holder should be withdrawn	150	147(98.06)	03(2.0)	1.50	.54

Average mean = 1.56

From Table 7: items 1 – 3 show the view of the respondents on the possible remedies to corruption in Nigeria with a mean weight of (1.50) (1.69) (1.50) respectively. Item 2 is greater than criterion mean while items 1 and 3 is equal to criterion mean of 1.50. This indicates that there are possible remedies to corruption in Nigeria when there is adequate funding, transparency of the public officers and absence of political office holder's immunity.

Discussion

The result showed that the social media can be used as means for corruption eradication in the public sector in Nigeria. These findings support the views of Charles and whaler (2014) who believed that the social media and internet penetration have a causal and negative impact on corruption. It was deduced that social media are effective tools against corruption when all the stakes holders effectively use social media. The study also revealed that civil servants and students use social media more than other sectors of the economy. The results showed that there are a lot of factors which can help the social media to serve as anti-corruption tools in Nigeria; such include free access of the people to internet facilities, formation and joining social media groups to discuss contemporary social issues, having access to value orientation and moral teaching and means of disseminating information to anti-graft agencies such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission and a host of others. The result also showed that corruption is a bane to the wheel of progress and needs to be eradicated in order to ensure rapid growth and development. Also this study showed that the more the increase in the social media patronage the more there should be reduction in the perpetrators of bribery and corruption in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the social media may be considered a round peg in a round hole to corruption eradication among the public sectors in Nigeria most especially at this crucial time when corruption has eaten deep the fabric of Nigerian Economy. It is therefore pertinent to recommend that there is no one that

cannot fight corruption irrespective of age, sex, social economic status in as much as the person has access to internet facilities and social media (Facebook, You tube, Wikipedia, Google, LinkedIn etc.) and the fight against corruption will be strengthened and have great power when many people are involved. Also, there is the need for Nigerian Government to create more job opportunities for many job seekers and reawakening the viability of the agricultural sector so that Nigeria will not only depend on crude oil as a means of economic sustenance. Lastly, the government of Nigeria should work on the improvement of social network and internet facilities to encourage the social media subscribers to continue to use the social media as check and balances for the arbitrary use of power of some public officials and political office holders who have chosen extortion, money laundering and embezzlement of public fund as unavoidable means of enriching themselves while in office.

References

- Akintola, S (2014) "Anti-Corruption Law: Will it be Another Toothless Bulldog", *Nigerian Tribune*, June 19, p.19
- Akani, C. (2001). *Corruption in Nigeria. The Niger Delta Experience*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Akani, C. (2015). *Nigeria and its Challenges*. Port Harcourt: Paragraphics
- Andersen, T. B. and Udor H.O. (2009). E-Government as an Anti-corruption Strategy. *Information Economics and Policy*, 21:201-210.
- Andersen, T. B. et al (2011). Does the Internet Reduce Corruption? Evidence from the U.S. States and Across Countries." *World Bank Economic Review*, 25:387-417.
- Andvig, J.C. and John H.T. (2000) Research on corruption: A policy oriented survey, Mimeo.
- Babalola, A. (2007). *Transparency Today and Tomorrow*. Abuja: ICPC.
- Benjamin I. C. and Ifediora C.U. (2014) Impact of Social Media Networks on Consumer Patronage in Nigeria: A Study of Jumia and Konga Nigeria Limited *European Journal of Business and*

Management ISSN 2222-1905 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2839 Vol.6, No.30,

- Chandan J. (2014) Department of economics working paper series, *Social media, internet and Corruption*, Louisiana State University, working paper 03.
- Chris C. O. and Shopeju J.O. (2010) Elite corruption and the culture of primitive accumulation in 21st century in Nigeria, *International Journal of peace and Development Studies* vol. 1 (2) pp15-24
- EFCC (2015). *Zero Tolerance*. The Magazine of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, 8(1),
- Ikpefan, O. and Ojeka, S. (2007) Employees' Perception on the possibility of corruption Eradication in Nigeria. *Journal of covenant University*, Ota.
- Obasanjo, O (2000). "*President Obasanjo's Speech at the Signing Ceremony of the Anti- Corruption Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*". Times Press, Lagos
- Obayelu A.E. (2007). Effects of Corruption and Economic Reforms on Economic Growth and Development: Lessons from Nigeria, *Nigerian Tribune*.
- Ogbonna, Ken SKC (2008). "Corruption Opposition, and the Ribadu Experience (11)", *Business Times* July 21.
- Omololu, Fagbadebo (2007). "Corruption, Governance and Political Instability in Nigeria", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* Vol. 1 (2), p.30
- Osimen, G. U. et al (2013). An Assessment of Corruption in the Public Sector in Nigeria: A Study of Akure South Local Government Area, Ondo State, *Canadian Social Science Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 5,
- Ponco and Azman (2016). The Roles of Facebook in creating new Anti-corruption Social Movement through online community in Indonesia, *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 6, Issue 7, July 2016 33 ISSN 2250-3153

- Rotimi, E. M. and Obasaju, B. (2013) Analysis of Corruption and Economic growth in Nigeria, *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, ISSN: 2229- 5313.
- Sirky (2011) *Social Media: A complete Guide*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc. The Guardian Editorial (2012). 'A Lid on campaign donations', 25 February, 22.
- The Nation Newspaper (2016). 'Ismaheel on corruption prevention', 9 April, p.14.
- The Punch Editorial (2008). 'Corruption in the Power Sector', 20 March. 14.
- Uzochukwu O. P. (2013) 'Transforming the Nigerian Polity: Imperatives of Leadership', in Critical Issues on Sustainable Democracy and Development: Nigerian Perspective. *Leadership Watch*.
- U4 – Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (2009), Measuring International Trends in Corruption, <http://www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/query.cfm?id=199> (accessed 31 July 2009).
- World Bank (1997). "Helping Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank", 1997.