

Analysis of Citizens' Perception of Whistleblowers' Protection in Kano Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

Whistleblowing is an essential but dangerous civic act. The Nigerian government assures potential whistleblowers of protection. However, it is debatable whether citizens are protected when they blow the whistle against corruption or not. This study analysed citizens' perception of whistleblowers' protection in the fight against corruption in Kano metropolis, Nigeria. Two hundred and sixty-nine (269) respondents were involved in this study; 266 were administered questionnaires while in-depth interviews were conducted with two (2) community leaders and one (1) university academic who specializes in the area of corruption and the public. The sample size was arrived at using a multi-stage sampling technique. The data collected via questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics, while the data from the in-depth interviews were transcribed, thematized, and used to augment the former. The study found that citizens perceive whistleblowing as a dangerous practice involving risks such as death threats, defamation of character, incrimination of the whistleblower, and loss of job, among others. The study also found that citizens are willing to blow the whistle against corruption because they perceive whistleblowing as a public service and civic duty. It was also discovered that citizens' confidence in the officials of the anti-corruption agencies to keep whistleblowers' identities confidential is an essential factor in the decision to blow the whistle against corruption. Based on the findings, recommendations were made, such as the need for whistleblower protection legislation to ensure the adequate protection of whistleblowers from possible retaliation and victimization in society.

Keywords: Citizens, Corruption, Perception, Protection, Whistleblowing.

Introduction

Corruption is a social ill that involves the abuse of power, position, or resources to gain an unfair advantage for self or others, such as family and acquaintances. It constitutes a problem for the growth and development of countries around the world, and as such, has become a matter of global concern. In Nigeria, one of the major challenges in the fight against corruption is detecting and exposing corruption. Whistleblowing in Nigeria has therefore become a veritable means to fighting this cancerous crime. It is the act of disclosing information about public or private organizations with the aim of revealing gross violations of citizens' rights, failures of the government's accountability, or corruption in public and/or private bodies that are of immediate or potential danger to the public interest (Santoro and Kumar, 2018). It is a social responsibility and a form of political vigilantism that contributes to institutional transparency and safeguards against potential abuse of government and corporate power. Section 24 (d) and (e) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) enjoins citizens to assist appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order. There are also codes of practice and policy directives to encourage whistleblowing. One such is the Federal Ministry of Finance's Whistleblowing Policy, established on December 21, 2016, to complement the efforts of the existing anti-graft agencies in the fight against corruption in the country. The use of whistleblowing in the fight against corruption has yielded some positive outcomes. In the first two years alone, it yielded N7.8 billion, US\$378million, and £27,800 in recoveries from public officials targeted by whistleblowers. The EFCC recovered 794 billion Naira between 2015 and 2019, in addition to hundreds of properties and other assets. ICPC scrutiny of practices, systems and procedures of MDAs' personnel cost from 2017 to 2019, yielded more than 41 billion Naira in recoveries from inflated personnel budgets. In 2019 alone, ICPC recovered 32 billion Naira worth of land, buildings, and vehicles (The State House, 2020).

Notwithstanding the positive outcomes, many citizens are still sceptical about blowing the whistle against corruption (Ogbu, 2017). This is because whistleblowers are mostly seen as threats to and a thorn on the flesh of the corrupt and thus susceptible to attacks. They are addressed with harmful labels, such as informants, snitches, or sneaks. This is illustrated in the case of the 23 members of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) in Ogun State, Nigeria, who lost their jobs after writing to the EFCC and ICPC about massive corruption and abuse of office by the management of the institution in 2016 (Dike, 2016). Whistleblowers are prone to perils such as intimidation, defamation of character, death threats, and so on. For these reasons, some members of the

general public have remained silent even in the face of obvious corrupt practices and unethical behaviour. According to Transparency International (2019), more than three-quarters of Nigerian citizens fear that they will suffer attack if they report corruption. Although the government encourages whistleblowing and assures potential whistleblowers of their protection, Ogbu (2017) argues that such a pledge is a mere promise not backed by the legislative power. The law is expected to address the question of the safety and protection of the whistleblower from attacks, and this ought to be of great concern in a country like Nigeria, where cultural resistance to 'snitching' is still very profound.

Studies such as Sule (2010); Chamunurwa (2015); Dauda (2017) and Ogbu (2017) have analysed whistleblowers' protection in the fight against corruption in different jurisdictions and from different perspectives. For instance, Sule (2010) analyzed the protection provisions in a whistleblowing policy from a strict legal lens. This, however, does not necessarily reflect the experience and the protection needs of citizens in the use of whistleblowing in the fight against corruption. Citizens must feel a sense of safety when blowing the whistle against corruption, otherwise, the practice will be discarded. This study, therefore, presents an analysis of the citizens' perception of whistleblowers' protection in the fight against corruption in Kano metropolis, Nigeria. Specifically, to achieve this, the specific objectives are:

1. To examine citizens' perception of whistleblowing against corruption.
2. To determine the willingness of citizens to blow the whistle in the fight against corruption
3. To determine the citizens' perception of whistleblower protections in the fight against corruption

The Concept of Corruption

Corruption is a multifaceted concept, with definitions depending on many factors, and thus defined from different perspectives (Ikpeze, 2013, Pogoso and Ogidi, 2012). Corruption has been defined as the pervasion of standards or changes from good to bad (Uzoh, 2012). In other words, corruption entails the violation of established rules and procedures, which leads to decadence in standards. Alternatively, Otite (2010) defined corruption as the perversion of integrity or the state of affairs through bribery, favour, or moral depravity. He further states that corruption takes place when at least two parties have interacted to change the structure or processes of society or the behaviour of functionaries to produce dishonest, unfaithful, or defiled situations. These definitions identify bribery as dishonest and unfaithful behaviour, as well as a corrupt act.

In addition to bribery, scholars like Shehu (2006), Ojukwu and Shopeju (2010); and Ikpeze, (2013) acknowledge nepotism, favouritism, kickbacks, fraud, embezzlement, and misappropriation of public funds, among others, as corrupt acts. From the above definitions, corruption can be summed up as the wrongful desire of pecuniary gain or acquisition of any other advantage; dishonest behaviours, wrongdoing, abuse of power or position, violations of laws, rules and regulations or ethical standards, committed by private or public officers to ameliorate or give undue advantage to the perpetrator.

Whistleblowing Practice and the Standard Theory of Whistleblowing

Calland and Dehn (cited in Cuka, 2016: 96) define whistleblowing as “the option available to an employee to raise concerns about workplace wrongdoing. It refers to the disclosure of wrongdoing that threatens others, rather than a personal grievance”. According to Corruption Watch (n.d), this act of wrongdoing includes unlawful activities, irregular conduct or activities, or malpractice in an organization. William (1995) defines whistleblowing as an open disclosure about significant wrongdoing made by a concerned citizen totally or predominantly motivated by notions of public interest, who has perceived the wrongdoing in a particular role and initiates the disclosure of her or his own free will, to a person or agency capable of investigating the complaint and facilitating the correction of wrongdoing. This definition is unique in that (a) it sees the public interest as the motivation behind whistleblowing; (b) it posits that whistleblowing is done out of total freewill; (c) it identifies that whistleblowing is done to correct societal wrongdoing; (d) it identifies whistleblowing as a civic responsibility of citizens.

The Standard Theory of Whistleblowing, propounded by Richard De George in 1982 provides a succinct analysis of the conditions under which whistleblowing by citizens is “morally permitted”, and “morally required”. He first refuted the view that whistleblowing should be prohibited. It states that prohibiting whistleblowing is morally repugnant to a free and democratic society and absolute loyalty towards anyone or any entity does not exist. He advanced that, whistleblowing is permissible if the corrupt act will cause serious and considerable harm to the general public. Whistleblowing becomes morally required when, in addition to the previous criteria, the whistleblower has documented evidence to back up his/her claim, has a good reason to believe that by going public the necessary changes will be brought about; and if the chance of being successful is worth the risk one takes and the danger to which one is exposed (Hoffman and McNulty, 2010). Therefore, citizens are required to blow the whistle against corruption when their safety is assured. Whistleblowers must therefore be protected against the harmful consequences of whistleblowing.

The Whistleblower's Protection and the Rational Choice Theory

Corruption is a hidden crime that is difficult to detect except when it is reported by a citizen who has information about how and where the corrupt act takes place (Salihu, 2019). Members of the general public are often too apprehensive to speak out about corrupt activities that they witness due to the fear of possible consequences (Uys, 2008). The adverse consequences suffered by whistleblowers manifest in diverse forms, including victimization, intimidation, recrimination by supervisors or co-workers, denial of work-related benefits, suspension from work, and sometimes outright dismissal (Ifejika, 2018). Many governments and international conventions have recognized the need to protect whistleblowers when disclosures are made with a reasonable belief that a wrongdoing has occurred (Santoro and Kumar, 2018). For instance, under Article 33 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), signatory countries are encouraged to incorporate domestic measures into their legislations and other provisions to protect whistleblower witnesses and their families from any unwarranted treatment.

In Nigeria, however, there is no legal provision, either in an Act of the National Assembly or a law of any state expressly protecting whistleblowers, either in the public or private sectors (Dauda, 2017). What is attainable are some elements of whistleblower encouragement and assurance in some codes of practice and policy directives. Scholars like Dauda (2017) and Ogbu (2017) have argued that the assurance to protect whistleblowers in the Whistleblowing Policy Guideline is a mere promise not backed by the law. According to the Rational Choice Theory advanced by Cohen and Felson (1979), people will make rational calculations when deciding whether to the blowing whistle against corruption or not. The rational decision is based on the extent to which they expect their decision to minimize losses and maximize benefits (Akers and Sellers, 2004). To encourage whistleblowing, individuals must have a good reason to believe that they will be protected against the harmful consequences of whistleblowing against corruption. Therefore, this theory suggests that the protection of whistleblowers against social, psychological, and economic consequences of whistleblowing is crucial to the effective use of whistleblowing in the fight against corruption.

Methodology

The research design is analytical and descriptive in nature. The target population for this study is the Kano Metropolis. A multistage sampling technique, involving different sampling techniques was adopted to select respondents in stages. Stage one: a cluster sample technique was used to divide the population of the study

into eight clusters (local governments) as follows: Dala, Fagge, Gwale, Kano Municipal, Kumbotso, Nasarawa, Tarauni, and Ungogo. Stage two: another cluster sampling technique was used to divide the clusters (local governments) in stage one into political wards. Stage three: a simple random technique was used to select two (2) political wards from the clusters (local governments), making 16 political wards. Stage four: another cluster sample technique was used to divide the sixteen (16) political wards selected in stage three into streets. The streets in the political wards vary according to the size of the area.

However, no political ward has fewer than five streets. Stage five: a simple random sample technique was used to select two (2) streets from each of the sixteen (16) political wards, making a total number of thirty-two (32) streets. Stage six: An availability sample technique was used to select nine (9) households from each of the thirty-two (32) streets and subsequently, one respondent was picked from each household. This makes a total of two hundred and eighty-eight (288) members of the general public engaged in the administration of questionnaires. However, analysis was done based on two hundred and sixty-six (266) questionnaires retrieved from the field and three (3) in-depth interviews conducted with two (2) community leaders and one (1) university academic who specializes in the area of corruption and public policy from the Department of Sociology, Bayero University, Kano. The members of the general public comprise of males and females between the ages of eighteen and above, especially youths, civil servants, retired civil servants, academics, religious, and community leaders.

The multistage sampling technique was chosen because it allows researchers to use multiple sampling techniques to arrive at sample size. It is also suitable for large geographical areas like Kano Metropolis, which covers about 499 square kilometres and has a diverse population. The questionnaire was administered with the help of four (4) research assistants who have degrees in social science courses and speak fluent English and Hausa languages. The research assistants were adequately trained in the ethics of research as well as how to administer the questionnaire. In addition to administering it, they also helped to read the questions to aged and non-literate respondents who couldn't read and also translated the questions to respondents where there was a need. The in-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher at the convenience of each interviewee. The in-depth interview with the academic was conducted in English, while those with the two community heads were conducted in the Hausa language. They were later translated into the English language. Instruments such as tape recorders, pens, and notebooks were used in each interview session. In-depth interview guides were developed and comprised of lead questions that related to the research objectives and provided the study with qualitative data for

some of the research questions. The quantitative data collected using questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage. The data collected from the in-depth interview were transcribed and used to augment the quantitative data. The interview was conducted with the help of recording tools such as a tape recorder, a notebook, and a pen.

Findings

This section presents and analyses the primary data collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents such as age, sex, the highest level of education, and average monthly income. The majority of the respondents (48.5%) are between 20 – 29 years of age. Those between 30 – 39 years constitute 21.8%, 11.3% are within the ages of 40 – 59, those below 20 years are 9.8%, and 50 – 59 years constitute 4.5%. Those aged 60 and above are the least categories of respondents (4.1%). It can also be observed from the distribution that a large proportion of the collected data is within the younger age grade in the study area. Youths have been described as the active and productive category of the Nigerian population and, therefore, are more likely to be familiar with issues related to the use of whistleblowing in the fight against corruption.

Also explicit from the table is the relatively higher percentage of male respondents. Males constitute 77.4% of the responses, 22.6% are females. This may be connected with cultural and religious practices that discourage female involvement and participation in public affairs or interaction with non-family members. Therefore, it was the males that were most readily available for this survey. The females are visible, but mostly unavailable. On the highest level of education, the table indicates that 53% of the respondents have tertiary education, 22.6% have secondary education, and 21.5% have postgraduate education, while 3.0% comprise those with informal education and primary education. This finding is not surprising because many higher institutions are situated in the study area. The availability of these institutions may have been a factor that encouraged the majority to enrol in graduate and postgraduate studies in the study area.

The table also reveals that a substantial number of respondents (32.3%) are civil servants, 32.3% are traders, 18.8% are students, 7.9% are farmers, and 5.6% are artisans. Other occupations constitute 3%. This finding is consistent with reality because the study area is metropolitan, where most government ministries and institutions are situated, hence the high number of respondents from the general public who are civil servants. In addition, the study area has been described as a commercial centre where individuals trade-in different articles. It is therefore not

surprising that a significant number of the respondents are traders. Finally, the table shows that respondents who earn below N20,000 and between N20,000 and N40,000 have the highest percentage of 27.8% and 36.8% respectively. This is followed by 15.8% who earn N40,001-N60,000. Those who earn N100,001 and above constitute 8.3%, 6.8% earn N80,001-N100,000, and N60,001-N80,000 is earned by 4.5%. The finding shows that most of the respondents are low-income earners. This affirms several reports which show that Nigeria, among other Third World countries, is a low-income country. The 9% who gave no response to the question may have considered their monthly income as personal information not to be revealed to anyone.

Table 2 shows that 59% of the respondents affirm that whistleblowing is a dangerous practice, while 41% do not perceive it as such. Evident from this distribution is that the majority of the respondents agree that whistleblowing is a dangerous practice. Some respondents further highlighted the risks involved in whistleblowing, including job loss, defamation of character, and death threat. On why whistleblowing is perceived as a dangerous practice, they revealed that there is no assurance of information security, and the protection pledged by law enforcement agencies is not backed up by law. Others opine that corruption is an organized crime involving powerful people who may harm the whistleblower.

This is further reinforced by a community leader's response to the in-depth interview:

When the cover of a whistleblower is blown, the corrupt may put the whistleblower under pressure especially if the whistleblower is a common member of the society. With his connections and political power, the corrupt may trace the whistleblower to his workplace and ensure that he is dismissed from work. The whistleblower may also be traced to his home and inflicted with heinous harm such as kidnapping and murder. Instead of being a hero, such a whistleblower may end up being a villain (IDI with a Community Head in Gwale Local Government, Kano, 17th March 2019).

Another community leader revealed that:

Most of the time, people who blow whistles are regarded as “amebo” and naturally, an “amebo” is not safe (Amebo in the English Language is

translated as “Snitch”). The law has taken cognizance of the dangers involved in whistleblowing and that is why Section 64 of the ICPC Act 2000 states that whatever information provided to the commission will not be divulged to a third party (IDI with a Community Head in Ungogo Local Government, Kano, 29th March 2019).

It is evident from the above view that there are attendant dangers to individuals who blow whistles. Some respondents believe that whistleblowing is not a dangerous practice because it helps in the fight against corruption. This is further buttressed in an in-depth with an intellectual that:

Even though whistleblowing can put whistleblowers in some danger, it plays an important role in disclosing corruption. Corruption and illegal activities in society are concealed activities that are often difficult to detect. In most instances, members of the general public are the first to witness corrupt activities and thus are better placed to disclose any unlawful act that they witness. This is crucial in the fight against corruption and the abuse of resources by the government. Blowing the whistle has become a vital act because corrupt activities have detrimental consequences on society (IDI with a Community Head in Gwale Local Government, Kano, 17th March 2019).

In all, if adequate security is not put in place to avert the impending dangers of whistleblowing, many will be discouraged from blowing the whistle against corruption.

Also indicated in the table is the finding of citizens’ willingness to blow the whistle against corruption where 76% of the respondents are willing to blow the whistle against corruption, while 24% are not. Some respondents revealed that their willingness to blow the whistle against corruption is based on the view that corruption destroys society and whistleblowing is crucial to the fight against corruption in society and, as such, is a public service and duty of every citizen. However, a few others are of the view that they are not willing to blow the whistle against corruption to avoid the dangers of whistleblowing, while others say they have apathy for the practice.

A community leader in an interview revealed that:

The current administration's campaign against corruption has stimulated the interest and participation of community members in the fight against corruption. However, much more publicity needs to be done to encourage the use of whistleblowing practices among members of the general public. (IDI with a Community Head in Gwale Local Government, Kano, 17th March, 2019).

Thus, it suffices to say that citizens are willing to blow the whistle against corruption because it is a civic responsibility.

On citizens' confidence in officials to keep their identity confidential, the table reveals that 64.3% of the citizens are confident that their identity will be kept confidential when they blow the whistle against corruption, while 35.7% are not confident. This means that most respondents have confidence in the officials of anti-corruption agencies to keep their identities confidential. Some revealed that most agencies' code of conduct provides for the identity of whistleblowers to be kept confidential and that information provided to the officials of anti-corruption is confidential and, therefore, will not be revealed to a third party. On the contrary, some believe that the confidentiality of whistleblowers is hard to maintain because unsuspecting officials can be bribed to reveal the whistleblower's identity to the corrupt. After all, the identity of the whistleblower may be revealed when asked to present evidence before a court.

In light of this, an academic in his response to the in-depth interview revealed that:

The investigating agencies are expected to protect the whistleblower's identity. If there is a need for the whistleblower to visit the court, the physical identity of the whistleblower may be masked to shield him or her from harm (IDI with an academic from the Department of Sociology, Bayero University Kano, 12th March 2019).

This implies that the anti-corruption agencies are duty-bound to conceal the identity of whistleblowers. This may include veiling them in the court of law if there is such a need.

Finally, the table indicates that 65% of respondents from citizens are not aware of any form of protection available for whistleblowers, while 35% are aware of it. This implies that the majority of citizens are not aware of any form of protection available for whistleblowers. However, those who said they are aware of the protection measures highlighted confidentiality, protection from litigation, job security, and protection from physical harm as the protection measures.

More questions asked about protection for whistleblowers revealed that there is an improvement in security and protection for individuals who expose corruption. However, an interview with an intellectual revealed that:

Every member of society has the right to report wrongdoing to authorities, and protecting the citizen's right to come forth with wrongdoing is closely related to protecting one's freedom of expression and conscience. It is also based on the principles of transparency and accountability. Unfortunately, no law clearly states how whistleblowers will be protected, the types of harm they may be protected against, and who will provide the security (IDI with an academic from the Department of Sociology, Bayero University Kano, 12th March 2019).

From the above, it can be inferred that no law clearly states how whistleblowers will be protected and who will protect them. It was, however, noted that any attempt to protect whistleblowers is an attempt to promote transparency and accountability in society.

In a similar view, a community leader in a response to the in-depth interview revealed that:

The government said whistleblowers are protected against dangers under the whistleblowing policy. This is only a "lips-service" because there have been instances where members of an organization blow the whistle against corruption activities by members of the management and consequently lose their jobs (IDI with a Community Head in Gwale Local Government, Kano, 17th March 2019).

To summarize, the government's assurances to protect whistleblowers are rarely met, and whistleblowers are frequently exposed to the negative consequences of their actions. This needs to be addressed quickly if the efficiency of the use of whistleblowing is to be maintained.

Discussion

The result of data collected revealed that citizens perceive whistleblowing against corruption as a dangerous practice and the risks involved may include job loss, defamation of character, and death threat. It revealed that whistleblowing is a dangerous practice because corruption is an organized crime involving powerful people who may harm the whistleblower. This is consistent with Ifejika's (2018), who argues that the adverse consequences suffered by whistleblowers manifest in diverse forms, including retaliation, victimization, intimidation, recrimination by supervisors or co-workers, denial of work-related benefits, suspension from work, and sometimes outright dismissal. The Standard Theory of Whistleblowing (1982) also suggests that the safety and protection of the whistleblower must be placed above the responsibility for exposing corruption. In other words, if there is reasonable ground to believe that whistleblowing may expose an individual to a serious risk, then whistleblowing must be avoided. This means that apathy toward whistleblowing may become the norm if whistleblowers are not protected against the harmful consequences of whistleblowing.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that, despite the dangers associated with whistleblowing, the majority are willing to blow the whistle against corruption. This is in tandem with the view of Salihu (2019:63), who argues that "even though there is no law that presently guarantees the protection of whistleblowers in Nigeria, some patriotic Nigerians have provided valuable information that has led to the recovery of funds, arrest and prosecution of guilty parties". It was revealed that those who are willing to blow the whistle against corruption do so in public service and to help eliminate corruption, which they acknowledge to be a major problem that threatens the essence of civilization and development in the country. This agrees with the Standard Theory of Whistleblowing (1982), which postulates that whistleblowing is permissible if the corrupt act will cause serious and considerable harm to the public.

It was also discovered that a significant number of respondents are confident that the officials of anti-corruption agencies will keep their identities confidential when they blow the whistle because there is a provision for it in the agency's code of conduct. It was also revealed that the majority of the respondents who were confident that officials would keep their identity were willing to blow the whistle

against corruption. This finding aligns with the Rational Choice Theory (1979), which argues that individuals will blow the whistle based on the extent to which they expect their decision to minimize losses and maximize benefits. This means that an individual will only expose corrupt practices to officials when identity confidentiality is assured. Thus, confidence in the officials to keep whistleblowers' identities confidential is an essential factor in the decision to blow the whistle against corruption. A few other respondents who were not confident that the officials would keep their identities confidential believed that the officials could betray them and reveal their identities to corrupt people, who may harm them. As indicated in the findings, the majority of the respondents are not aware of the existence of protection for whistleblowers. The government's promises to protect whistleblowers are rarely kept, and whistleblowers are frequently subjected to the negative consequences of their actions. This needs to be addressed quickly if the efficiency of the use of whistleblowing is to be maintained.

Recommendations

Despite the present circumstances, this study is optimistic that proper adoption of the measures recommended in it would remedy the situation and bring about significant improvement vis-a-vis the protection of whistleblowers in the fight against corruption:

1. The Nigerian Federal Government should enact a Whistleblower Protection Bill to evolve a legal framework for ensuring the adequate protection of whistleblowers from possible retaliation and victimization in the public and private sectors. This would serve as the foundation upon which a more functional whistleblowing practice in the country will be erected.
2. The anti-graft agencies need to work in closer collaboration with relevant civil society organizations to promote whistleblowing culture by sensitizing and enlightening the masses on the subject matter. With well-articulated advocacy and awareness, whistleblowing can serve as an important instrument for mobilizing citizens' support for the government's anti-graft campaign in Nigeria.
3. The government should ensure the adequate and timely reward of whistleblowers as it would go a long way to motivate citizens not to hesitate to report any acts of corruption in society.

Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes towards enriching the theoretical and practical understanding of whistleblowing in the Kano metropolis, and by implication Nigeria. At present, there is a paucity of empirical research conducted on the subject matter due to the newness of the whistleblowing policy in the country. This study, therefore, provides empirical baseline data on the whistleblowing policy to stimulate research in the field by other researchers and academics, especially in the field of criminology. The findings of this study serve as a reference point for future studies.

Conclusion

This study concludes that whistleblowing is a dangerous practice and the risks include death threat, defamation of character, incrimination of the whistleblower, loss of job and denial of work-related benefits. Citizens are hardly aware of the existence of any protection for whistleblowers, as the government's assurance to protect whistleblowers is hardly fulfilled and whistleblowers are often exposed to risks. Nonetheless, the majority of citizens are willing to blow the whistle against corruption because corruption destroys society and whistleblowing is a public service and duty of every citizen. The officials of anti-corruption must gain the trust and confidence of the citizens to enable them to blow the whistle against corruption. Comprehensive and effective whistleblowing legislation that would offer adequate protection for citizens who act in public spirit to expose corruption is also essential. This study is a child of necessity at a time when corruption continues to pose a serious challenge to the sustainable development and social fabric of Nigeria and Africa at large. The findings of this study have the potentials to trigger legislative and policy amendments geared toward encouraging the use of whistleblowing in the fight against corruption.

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Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Age	Frequency (N=266)	Percentage (100.0)
Below 20	26	9.8
20 – 29	129	48.5
30 – 39	58	21.8
40 – 59	30	11.3
50 – 59	12	4.5
60 and Above	11	4.1
Sex		
Male	206	77.4
Female	60	22.6
Highest Level of Education		
Informal Education	3	1.1
Primary	5	1.9
Secondary	60	22.6
Tertiary	141	53
Postgraduate	57	21.5
Occupation		
Civil Servants	86	32.3
Trading	86	32.3
Artisanship	15	5.6
Farming	21	7.9
Student	50	18.8
Others	8	3
Average Monthly Income		
Below N20,000	74	27.8
N20,000 - N40,000	98	36.8
N40,001 - N60,000	42	15.8
N60,001 - N80,000	12	4.5
N80,001 - N100,000	18	6.8
N100,001 and above	22	8.3

Table 2: Protection of Whistleblowers

Variables	Frequency (N=266)	Percentage (100.0)
Whistleblowing is a Dangerous Practice		
Yes	158	59
No	108	41
Citizens' Willingness to Blow Whistle Against Corruption		
Yes	202	76
No	64	24
Citizens' Confidence in Officials to Keep Their Identity Confidential		
Yes	64	171
No	173	65
Whether Citizens Are Aware of the Existence of Protection for Whistleblowers		
Yes	93	35
No	173	65

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