



The Value System and Governance in Contemporary Nigeria: An Analysis

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Abstract

Governance in Nigeria continues to face persistent challenges despite numerous reform efforts over the years. This study examines how Nigeria's dominant value system affects governance. The study mainly explored the use of qualitative design approaches, using ex-post analysis of the dominant values and how they contribute to institutional weakness, corruption and recurrent policy failure. The paper argues that a cycle exists where weak institutions enable corrupt practices, and corruption in turn undermines policy design and implementation leading to governance failure and further institutional decay. The findings reveal that Nigeria's dominant value system which often prioritizes personal again, patronage and status, over integrity, meritocracy and accountability sustains this cycle. Based on these findings, the paper recommended the strengthening of institutional autonomy and accountability, embedding value re-orientation in governance culture, improving policy implementation and monitoring, enhancing transparency and citizen participation and reforming political recruitment processes. The study concludes that breaking these abnormalities in governance requires radical multidimensional approaches. Addressing the value dimension is critical for achieving sustainable and effective governance in Nigeria.

Key words: Value system, governance, institutional weakness, corruption, policy failure, etc.

Introduction

According to the socio-cultural school or perspective of the modernization school of development and under-development, development is not exclusively related to the economic and political terrains, but also intertwined with socio-cultural factors as well. The proponents of this perspective believe that it is the changes in the social, cultural and institutional system that create the necessary condition which usher in economic development. There are many dimensions or aspects of the socio-cultural theory but here, this paper will focus on the extent of cultural secularization of society and its political culture because they are more closely related and intertwined with the concept of values (Okereke & Ekpe, 2010).

According to the Socio—Cultural theory of modernization, the extent of cultural secularization of a society is also used to measure the rate of modernization. Secularization here implies the process whereby men become increasingly rational, analytical, and empirical in their political actions. When a society continuously scrutinizes its ways of doing things in terms of their suitability, this is an indication of modernization. On the other hand, if responses to issues are based on primordial factors rather than rationality, this is seen as a mark of traditionality (Okereke & Epke, 2010).

The political culture theory on the other hand, argues that stable democracy requires a civic culture of participation, and a state becomes modernized when it moves away from

traditional and parochial cultural system to a modern and enduring cultural system (civic culture), and such states are characterized by such cultural traits as self-discipline and devotion to hard work. (Almond & Verba, 1963). Unfortunately, in Nigeria, our political culture is parochial and subject oriented, there is mutual suspicion, and lack of trust. It is pluralistic, segmented, disoriented and many a time, violent.

In view of the foregoing, the crux of this paper is that; the challenge of governance in Nigeria is not the deficit of laws and institutions, rather, it's a misalignment between formal governance rules and dominant societal values. Therefore, sustainable reform requires institutional redesign, plus deliberate value reorientation that makes accountability and public service socially prestigious, not politically costly.

Governance in Nigeria has consistently under-performed relative to the country's human and material endowments. Despite successive constitutional reforms, policy initiatives, and anti-corruption drives, indicators of service delivery, accountability, and public trust remain weak. The persistence of these deficits suggest that the problem extends institutional design. Scholars increasingly argue that informal norms, beliefs and cultural expectations – collectively termed the “value system” interact with formal rules to determine governance outcomes. Nigeria's plural society is characterized by strong communal loyalties, patron – client relations and materialistic orientations that predate colonial state formation, but have been amplified by the post oil – boom political economy. These values shape how citizens relate to the state, how public officials exercise power, and how policies are implemented on the ground. Therefore any attempt to understand governance challenges in Nigeria must interrogate the interface between societal values and state institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria operates under a constitutional framework that prescribes values of accountability, rule of law, meritocracy, transparency and public service as the foundation of governance. However, empirical evidence and governance indices consistently show a wide gap between these constitutional ideals and actual governance. Despite the existence of formal institutions, Nigeria continues to rank low on the transparency index and records weak performance on World Bank governance indicators for control of corruption, government effectiveness and rule of law (Transparency International, 2023, World Bank, 2023).

This persistent governance deficit stains largely from a misalignment between Nigeria's formal system and the dominant informal values that shape political and bureaucratic behaviour. Informal values such as prebendalism, ethnic particularism, big man impunity, survivalism and self-help culture, materialism and rentier mentality, and so on, have become entrenched in the political culture since the colonial and military eras (Joseph, 2014). As a result, public office is often treated as a prebend for distributing resources to kin, ethnic, or party loyalists, rather than as a trust for serving the public interest. This value misalignment produces three critical problems; institutional decay/weakness; normalization of corruption; policy failure, and inconsistency, among others. These three problems don't exist in isolation. They reinforce each other in a cycle (World Bank, 2023).

For example; institutions decay when merit is replaced by connection. When recruitment, promotion and contracts in ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs),

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judiciary and the civil service are based on “who you know”, not “what you know”. This is the bane of the public/civil service departments and agencies in Nigeria, and this is why in Nigeria, we have very weak institutions, instead of strong institutions. The consequence of all these are; competence drops, oversight collapses and incentives shifts because the system rewards loyalty over performance. Workers learn that “stealing small” is safer than “working hard”, the result is that citizens and officials start seeing corruption as normal (World Bank, 2023).

When corruption is normalized, policies can’t work even when it is well-written, and this creates implementation gaps. For example, the Nigerian content Act or Digital Economy policy 2020 -2030. The policy says “award contracts to competent local firms”. But because “our son must eat is the dominant value, contracts go to brief case companies owned by politicians and their allies. The policy dies at implementation stage etc. (Joseph, 2014; Afrobarometer, 2022).

Research Questions

The research questions that will guide this research are as follows:

1. How does the misalignment between the dominant informal values and Nigeria’s formal system lead to institutional decay or weakness?
2. To what extent is it true that the misalignment between the dominant informal values and Nigeria’s formal system lead to the normalization of corruption?
3. Is it true that institutional weakness and the extreme rate of corruption in Nigeria is responsible for consistent policy failures, and policy summersaults?

Research Hypotheses

1. Nigeria’s governance crisis is not just about institutional weakness or decay, it is also cultural, and until value shifts toward meritocracy, impersonality, impartiality, strict adherence to rules and regulations, transparency and accountability, reforms no matter how-well written and intentioned, will have limited impact or success.
2. Values don’t change by sermon alone, they change when institutions positively reward ethical behaviour and severally punish unethical behavior like corruption. Then the desired change will take root. If not, the institutional rot gets out of hand.
3. If the pervasive weakness and primitive corruption in Nigerian institutions is not drastically and radically stopped, public policy failures and summersaults will most likely lead to a failed /collapsed state.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyse the value system and governance in contemporary Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To explain how certain dominant informal values in Nigeria lead to institutional weakness and / or decay.
2. To X-ray the relationship between the dominant informal values and the high rate of corruption in Nigeria.
3. To examine how extreme corruption leads to consistent policy failures and summersaults in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The Concept of Values

The word values has so many meanings depending on the context it is used or being used values are principles, fundamental convictions, ideas, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or as reference points in decision making, or the evaluation of beliefs or action (Elendu, 2009). Lipman (2010) is of the view that Nigeria is a pluralistic society, and therefore, there is no universally accepted notion of what acceptable values are; values in Nigeria are often influenced by such considerations as ethnicity, religion, level of education and tribalism among others.

Values can also be defined as the moral principles and standards which guide human actions. Such principles are highly appreciated by people in society. This is so because they make society what it should be; peaceful and progressive. The acceptable social values include honesty, integrity, courage, loyalty, among others. These values highlighted here are part of the core cherished values or principles in the public service. But unfortunately, they are very scarce in the Nigerian public service (Osalusi, & Ajayi, 2021). Okpilike (2010) view values as one's principles or standards, one's judgement of what is valuable and important to life.

Society is dynamic and not static, and as societies change from simple traditional societies to complex modern societies, people, values, trends and activities, also change. Just as society are developing, values have also continued to change to suit the character of a changing world which has brought in an increased wave of moral decadence and laxity (Osalusi, & Ajayi, 2021; Ibia, 2016).

Values of a society is one of the basic elements of non-material aspect of culture. You cannot touch or see it physically but the fact is that it is a social reality. According to Eshleman and Cashion (1983), and Kendall (2002), values are ideas shared by the people in a society, on what is important and worthwhile. Our values are the basis of our judgement, about what is desirable, beautiful, correct and good, as well as what is undesirable, ugly, incorrect and bad. Most values have both positive and negative counterparts which are reciprocally related. Values have a tremendous influence on daily life whether as an individual, group, private or public person or official because social norms (which are rules of conduct or social expectations for behaviour) are based on them. for example, a society that values hard work will have norms against laziness. A society that values democracy will have norms ensuring fundamental human rights and rule of law.

According to Ukegbu, Mezieobi, Abudullahi, Adebayo, Udechukwu, Anyaocha, and Nwachukwu (2019), there are various attributes of values and some of them include: honesty, justice and selflessness. Honesty is the quality of being truthful, straight forward and reliable. An honest person is courageously and uncompromisingly supportive of truth, fairness and justice. He is committed to duty, and any task set before him. In a society where majority of the people are honest and always seeking to advance the course or values of honesty and justice, there is the likelihood that they may experience economic, social and political growth or advancement. However, the reverse is the case in Nigeria. The leadership, and the followership are both fantastically corrupt, wicked, dishonest and insincere creating the monster of bad governance that has permeated all strata of the Nigerian state. This is why today, Nigeria is not

only socially, economically and politically underdeveloped, but she is also tending towards a failed or collapsed state.

Concept of National Values and Leadership in Nigeria

National values are qualities, principles and behaviours every nation such as Nigeria holds in very high esteem for the purpose of nation building and /or achievement of core national aspirations. A national value is the behaviour, conduct and aspiration of the people which the state encourage and promote. Patriotism, loyalty, honesty, dedication to duty, cleanliness, obedience to properly constituted authority, self-discipline, self-reliance, and respect for national symbols amongst others, have been identified as among Nigeria's national values (Oluwagbohunmi, 2017).

National values are treated as static mental structures with little emphasis placed on within the action, it is leading by example, that is doing the right thing for right reasons, not compromising the core principles. They are morally, politically and economically motivated type of behaviours. Some of the cherished and upheld national values are; honesty, respect for national symbols and elders, co-operation, hard work, respect for human life, and patience, patriotism, loyalty and dedication to duty (Osalusi, 2010).

However, a critique of the above cherished national values, vis-à-vis the leadership of this country reveals that it is as if these national values are only to be observed by the poor masses and not the leadership at all levels. It's as if these rules are only made for the poor masses and not people in leadership positions because in terms of patriotism they are the most unpatriotic, they are extremely dishonest, wickedly and unrepentantly corrupt, unimaginably arrogant and ready to kill at all times just to usurp and retain political power at all costs. They are loyal only to themselves, and to their pockets, families, friends, greed and selfishness, and not to the nation. They exhibit a level of impunity, rascality and senselessness that are unimaginable and unthinkable in other climes, yet they call for continual sacrifice, patience and understanding from these poor masses, even when they know that except in their dreams, they cannot accept to do what they continually deceive the poor masses to believe or do.

Values and Professional Ethics in the Public Service

There are some values and professional ethics clearly enshrined in the constitution, as well as in public services rules and regulations, otherwise called the General Orders (GOs) which public officers or officials are supposed to observe daily. Some of these values, principles and ethics are listed as follows; political neutrality, impersonality, meritocracy, impartiality, accountability, strict adherence to rules and regulations (due process), and respect for national justice (Obikeze & Obi Emeka, 2004; Okere, 2015 (mimeo)). They are briefly explained below:

- **Political Neutrality:** This implies that public servants must put their politics, and political affiliations in their pockets. The argument on behalf of this feature is that unless the public servant / administrator is neutral in politics, he/she is likely to be partisan in support of one government or the other.
- **Impersonality:** This means that public servants in the performance of their duties and operations must be devoid of sentiments, emotions, hatred, favouritism, nepotism, and so on, in favour or against any person or group of individuals. They are supposed to be fair

and objective. Impersonality also mean that there is a difference between personal issues and public matters which specific rules and procedures for execution.

- **Meritocracy:** This means that appointments or recruitments, promotion award of contracts and so on, must be based on merit and competence, and not on “who you know” or sentiments, favouritism, nepotism or emotions.
- **Impartiality (objectivity):** This principle is also related to meritocracy and impersonality. Public servants are supposed to treat everyone fairly, equally and respectfully. They are also supposed to show equal loyalty to the duly elected government of the day, no matter its political complexion or affiliations.
- **Accountability:** This means that public officials are accountable to the general public and should be conscious not to make mistakes that would expose them to public ridicule and criticisms.
- **Adherence to Rules and Regulations:** This is the adherence of the staff to impersonal rules and regulations such as the GOs, circulars and formal directives and instructions. This principle is also related to impersonality.
- **Respect for Natural Justice:** This entails that a public official must observe the principle of natural justice in his/her dealings with the public. This principle requires that the administrator/politician must observe the golden rule, which says that “you should do unto others what you expect them to do unto you”. Simply put, this principle is saying that what is good for the geese, is also good for the gander. Another principle of natural justice is saying that an administrator cannot be a judge in a case brought against him/her. This is to enable all parties concerned to have justice and fair play.

These principles, ethics or values are well known to every public servant. Even politicians, after appointment to any position, efforts are made to give them orientation and education in public service rules and regulations and on these values or principles highlighted above. Yet the level of criminality and impunity that goes on in these MDAs are best imagined.

Concept of Governance and Good Governance

In specific terms, governance can be referred to as the way and manner in which political power is applied in the management of a country’s economic and social resources in order to achieve national development (World Bank, 1992). Put in another way, governance can also refer to how those that have political use refer to another way, governance can also refer to how those that have political power use it to mobilise and management both men and material, non – material and financial resources of the state in such an efficient, effective and organized manner so that poverty, inequality, unemployment, and so on, can be eradicated or reduced to the barest minimum (Oshionebo, 2004).

Put in a nutshell, governance is that machinery or framework put in place by the state or its functionaries so as to create the convenient environment necessary for the achievement of national development. These machineries or frameworks put in place if well managed and/or administered could lead to good governance, but if not, could also lead to bad governance.

From the foregoing, good governance can be said to be present when the following characteristics are noticeable; human rights and rule of law is guaranteed; accountability of political office holders and public functionaries (public servants); transparency in all

government processes and procedures; freedom of the press; the achievement of national development which manifests in the form of poverty reduction or eradication, social justice, equality and sustainable economic growth, etc.

Dimensions of Governance

Three dimensions of governance have been identified. They are; political, economic and social governance (Oshionebo, 2004). They are briefly explained below;

Political Governance

Political governance refers to those processes by which a society produces and sustains those who manages its affairs, makes rules and regulations (laws), as well as implement these rules and regulations so that equity, justice, peace and sustainable socio-economic development can be achieved. Political governance encompasses but not limited to the following; electoral process, the quality of leadership or of the process; the integrity and transparency of the process; the quality of the leadership or individuals selected, nominated or elected to occupy public offices; machineries put in place to holding these elected officials and public servants accountable to the people, rule of law and legitimacy of the government, etc. The political governance of a state is usually vested in the hands of the three major arms of government which are the executive, legislature and the judiciary. Others include; the media and Civil Society Organisations(CSOs), etc.

Economic Governance

This relates to all institutional framework or mechanisms, and processes as well as procedures which a society uses to come up with a mix of policies needed for the production and distribution of goods and services.

Economic governance also relates to or refers to how certain critical institutions are used to achieve some of the economic policies of government. These institutions are most times referred to as economic institutions. Examples include; the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Commercial banks, Manufacturing companies, the Nigerian Deposit and Insurance Corporation (NDIC), Insurance companies, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and many other related organisations in the petroleum and gas sector, etc. It is also important for us to note here that the legislature like the Nigerian National Assembly is a strategic institution in the economic governance of Nigerian ((Oshionebo, 2004).

Social Governance

Social governance refers to the basic or fundamental values, ethics, morals, beliefs and norms guiding the behaviour of individuals and groups as members of society. it can be defined as the prism which the society uses to assess the behaviour of individuals, and groups within a society. It is the standard that can be used to judge the rightness or wrongness of individuals and groupsbehaviour or actions in society. social governance provides the moral or ethical foundations for political and economic governance (Oshionebo, 2004).

Misalignment of the Informal dominant values and institutional decay/weakness in the Nigerian State

The persistence of governance deficit as we previously noted, from a misalignment between Nigeria's formal value system and the dominant informal values that shape political and bureaucratic behaviour. Informal values such as prebendalism, clientilism, ethnic particularism, and "bigman impunity" have become entrenched in the political culture since the colonial and military eras (Joseph, 2014). As a result, public office is often treated as a prebend for distributing resources to kin, ethnic, or party loyalists rather as a trust for serving the public interest. This value misalignment has led to the prevalence of institutional weakness or decay in Nigeria. This is why most public service recruitments is based on either the highest bidder, "whom you know" your ethnic and religious group, and so on. And when people are recruited, there is no merit based promotion. All these leads to incompetence and low capacity because most of the people recruited or promoted are either unqualified and technically incompetent. This abnormally cuts across the entire strand of the public service, including the judiciary (World Bank, 2023). The overall consequences of institutional weakness or decay are; (i) competence drops; unqualified people run agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), NNPC, CBN, and etc. Many of the public servants either don't understand the complex rules/laws, or deliberately twist the rules for selfish purposes. This is why despite many years of fighting corruption, yet, corruption is growing by leaps and bounds while NNPC looks like the seat of corruption in Nigeria; (ii) institutional weakness also leads to oversight collapses; they can't monitor themselves, and other institutions. Let's use the National Assembly and State Assemblies as an example. They are a colossal failure when it comes to legislative oversights in Nigeria. The same apply to the Auditor – General's reports, which pile up without no sanctions; (iii) institutional weakness also leads to shifts in incentives since the system rewards blind loyalty over performance, thus, workers learn that "stealing small" is safer than "working hard". The unqualified staff rely on shortcuts over time, the institution forgets how to follow procedure. Citizens also notice and develops the attitude of; if the people in charge don't know, or follow the rules, why should I follow them.

The value system and the normalization of corruption in Nigeria

When institutions are weak leading to drops in competence and due process; the collapse of oversight and shift in incentives, the result is that citizens and officials start seeing corruption as normal. Afrobarometer (2022) found 73% of Nigerians believe that most of the officials if not all of them are corrupt, but 45% say its still acceptable if their own person benefits. That's normalization. In this case corruption moves from "crime to culture". This is what scholars like Joseph (2014) call "prebendal mindset" (public office is seen as a private property).

The foregoing is exactly what is currently going on. Corruption has become so endemic that the problem is not only that officials are corrupt, but that corruption is official. The corruption of public office in Nigeria is seen as an opportunity to enrich oneself rather than as an opportunity to offer service. These days official assignments like the involvement in the execution of projects in the public service is defined in terms of what the officer hopes to get from such assignment (Okereke, 2003).

When corruption is normal, policies can't work even if they are well – written because of the following reasons (i) implementation gap is created. Take the Nigerian Content Act, or Digital Economy policy 2020 – 2030. The policy says “award contracts to competent local firms but because “our son or brother must eat” is the dominant value, contracts go to briefcase companies owned by politicians and their allies. The policy dies at implementation stage despite the fact that it is a beautiful and well written policy; (ii) rent-seeking over reform; in this case, officials benefit from bad policies. If a policy is vague or inconsistent, it creates room for bribes /waivers. So there is no incentive to make policies clear or long-term (Klitgaard, 1988); third, compliance collapses. Citizens don't obey laws they see as tools for elite enrichment. This is why most people don't like to pay tax, leading to rise in tax evasion. Moreso, regulatory laws or frameworks are ignored or smartly bypassed. Without compliance, even good policies fails (Afrobarometer, 2023).

The value system, policy failure and inconsistency of reforms in Nigeria

Another strata of the impact of Nigeria's informal dominant values is frequent policy failure and the inconsistency of reforms in Nigeria. Repeated policy failure erodes state legitimacy. Citizens conclude government does not work” so they stop paying taxes and bypass formal courts for informal systems. Institutions loose both revenue and authority (World Bank, 2003). Policy inconsistency worsens this; each new administration abandons predecessor projects to reward “our own contractors’ leaving institutions half-built and without maintenance culture (Joseph, 2014). Without continuity, Nigeria fails to build institutional memory, which explains why civil service reforms in 1988, 2004, and 2020 produced limited results (World Bank, 2023).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework applied in this study is the Ecological /Prismatic theory. This theory was developed by Professor Fred W. Riggs (1917). Professor Riggs in his bid to close the intellectual gap that existed during his time adopted two major analytical tools which are inter-related or intertwined. These are the ecological theory and the structural functional analytical approach.

According to Riggs, in a social system, environment broadly comprises institutions, history, law, ethics, philosophy, religion, education, tradition, beliefs, values, symbols, myths, scientific and technological development, etc. All institutions are influenced by a society's environment and culture. Public administration inclusive. Public administration being a sub-system, interacts with the social system. This is the main reason why we say, public administration is culture bound (Okere, 2019, Nwachukwu, 2008, Mutiullah, 2013).

From the point of view of comparative studies, Riggs is of the opinion that administration is culture bound, and since public administration is culture bound or shaped by its setting or environment, it develops its own peculiar characteristics in different cultural areas or environment. A look at the structure and functions of public administration in different countries will reveal that though there is manifest similarity in formal organizations, yet their informal and behaviour patterns possess considerable diversities, each being shaped by its

societal culture. On account of these diversities, Fred Riggs classified societies into (i) fused; (ii) prismatic and (iii) diffracted or refracted societies.

These differences in social, cultural, historical, economic, scientific and technological environments, and how they affect the way in which administration is conducted or practiced, and how in turn these administrative actions affect the society is related to what Professor Riggs call the ecology of public administration.

The Prismatic Society / Theory

The prismatic society is a transitional or developing society that has the characteristics or features of both the fused (traditional society) and the diffracted or refracted society (industrialized society). Examples of prismatic societies are Nigeria, India, Ghana, etc; while examples of refracted or diffracted societies are USA, Canada, European Union, Britain and so on.

The focus of Riggs analyses is the study of certain key elements of the social structure in a prismatic society, and their interactions with the administrative sub-system which he describes as “Sala”. The “Sala” is half way between the modern office and the traditional sub-system. The “Sala” holds an extra-ordinary amount of power vis-à-vis other political institutions, though the scope of bureaucratic power may still be limited and its efficiency low. The sala is often associated with institutional corruption, bureaucratic enclaves of self protecting management, unequal distribution of services to the public, nepotism, and quite generally, a wide gap between actual behaviour and the forms and standards of administrative conduct. In the sala administration, rationality is ignored, while corruption and nepotism is prevalent (Okere, 2019; Mutiullah, 2013, Nwachukwu, 2008).

The prismatic society according to Riggs is characterized by the following features; (i) formalism (ii) heterogeneity and (iii) overlapping (Okere, 2019, Mutiullah, 2013). They are briefly explained below;

Formalism: A prismatic society is characterized by high degree of formalism. This means that there exist a wide gap between formally established rules, code of conduct and their practice. That is, formal behaviour of officials do not tally with the expectation of established rules. Instead of formalistic impersonality, there is subjectivity. Decisions and actions of officials are based on; who is involved, his family background, ethnic group, religion, status, political affiliations, and so on (Njoku, 2009).

Heterogeneity: In a prismatic society, there is high degree of heterogeneity which means that different kinds of systems, practices and view points exist or co-exist side by side. People are treated differently based on their ethnic, family and political background. Whether in the courts, hospital, school, churches and mosques etc. Treatment, respect and honouring of individuals differ. It is even worse in the public service (Njoku, 2009).

Overlapping: The overlapping features of a prismatic society according to Riggs means the presence or co-existence of those structures found in a fused or traditional society. It means that obedience or acceptance in society is not based on modern norms, values or law, but on tradition, religion, ethnicity and customs. Overlapping, in summary means the extent which administrative behaviour is actually determined by non-administrative criteria such as family,

background, ethnicity, political party affiliations, status, connections, and so on, and not what the rules and regulations or the law says (Njoku, 2009).

The prismatic economy

Professor Riggs describes the economy in a prismatic society as a bazaar- canteen economy. The major characteristics of a prismatic economy are; price indeterminacy, domination of the economy by the elites and pariah entrepreneurship.

From the foregoing, we can see that the theory of ecology and prismatic society is related to this study because it clearly and vividly captures the basic characteristics of public administration in Nigeria, revealing that corruption and weak institutions makes it extremely difficult to design and implement policies which are just and beneficial to all (Okere, 2019).

Research Method

This study applied qualitative research method. The researcher did an ex-post assessment or analysis of the value system and governance in contemporary Nigeria, using explanatory research design. Documentary /content analysis and ex-post factor analysis were used to analyse how the dominant informal values in Nigeria lead to institutional weakness and decay, corruption, and constant policy failures and summersaults, which makes reforms, either half implemented, or non-implemented at all in most cases.

Conclusion

This study applied qualitative research method in order to analyse the role informal values play in the governance of Nigeria. The findings of this study show that due to these dominant values like ethnicity, nepotism, “who do you know” rather than what you know” political interference, and so on, ministries, departments and agencies have become too weak in the execution of their duties, leading to excessive corruption, policy failures and inconsistency. This paper therefore concludes that the cycle of institutional weakness, corruption and policy failures are responsible for the failures of successive reform initiatives to achieve the desired goals or objectives. Therefore, to break this cycle requires radical approaches and value re-orientation.

Recommendations

In view of the findings above, this study makes the following recommendations:

1. Since institutional weakness is entry point of the cycle, anti-corruption agencies like EFCC, ICPC, code of conduct Bureau and the judiciary need to be more strengthened and autonomous so that they can have operational independence from executive interference. This includes secure funding through consolidated revenue fund (CRF) and appointment processes insulated from politics. These will definitely strengthen institutional autonomy and accountability.
2. There is need to embed value re-orientation in governance culture. This is because corruption thrives where public office is treated as a means of personal enrichment. Nigeria needs a renewed national value system as previously highlighted elsewhere in this paper which prioritizes integrity, meritocracy, accountability and public service over big man

status. This can be driven through civic education, code of conduct enforcement for public officers and leadership by example at the top. Value change attacks the behaviour link in the cycle.

3. There is need to also enhance transparency and citizen participation. The cycle of corruption persists due to low citizen oversight. Digital platforms for budget tracking like BudgIT must be easily made accessible for everyone. Moreso, mandatory and open asset declaration and protection for whistleblowers increase the cost of corruption. When citizens can monitor policy delivery, institutional actors face higher accountability pressure.
4. There is urgent need to reform the political recruitment process. Since values of public officials shape institutions, political parties, need internal democracy and transparent candidate selection, campaign finance reform and stricter enforcement of electoral laws reduce the entry of corrupt actors into office, breaking the cycle at its source.
5. There is need to improve policy design, implementation and monitoring. Policy failure is sustained by weak implementation structures and lack of feedback loops. Therefore, there is need to create independent policy evaluation units outside the implementing MDAs, mandate public disclosure of implementation budgets, and timelines on government portals, etc.

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