



## WHISTLE BLOWING MECHANISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The aspiration for rapid economic development in Nigeria has become elusive, primarily due to persistent corruption and opportunism among public officials who are draining the economy. Corruption thrives in environments lacking accountability and transparency within public offices. The implementation of whistle-blowing mechanisms is crucial, as it fosters accountability and promotes good governance. Globally, whistle-blowing has garnered significant attention from stakeholders in both the financial and public sectors, as neglecting this practice can severely hinder sustainable economic growth and development. This study explored the relationship between whistle-blowing and economic development in Nigeria, focusing on both internal and external whistle-blowing mechanisms. The study utilized real gross domestic product (GDP) growth as an indicator of economic performance. It was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Agency Theory, employing a mixed research design. The target population comprised federal ministries and parastatals in Nigeria, with data collected through structured questionnaires and secondary sources from the Central Bank of Nigeria's Statistical Bulletin (2018-2023). The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multivariate regression. The findings indicated a significant relationship between all dimensions of whistle-blowing—both internal and external—and real GDP growth in Nigeria during the study period. Consequently, the study concluded that whistle-blowing plays a significant role in the economic development of Nigeria. It recommends the effective implementation of whistle-blowing policies in public institutions to combat pervasive corruption and emphasizes the importance of protecting whistleblowers to encourage the reporting of corrupt activities in the public sector, thereby fostering economic development.

**Keyword: Whistle blowing, economic development, internal whistle blowing mechanism, external whistle blowing mechanism, theory of planned behaviour, real gross domestic product growth.**

### INTRODUCTION

Every sovereign nation of the world including Nigeria desires to achieve development that secures and guarantees sound quality of life of the citizens in terms of good living standard, security, freedom, welfare, considerable reduction of abject poverty and unemployment rattling employable individuals. This implies that the measure of government's ingenuity is evidenced in the nation's development through provision of adequate infrastructures. Gboyega (2003) views development as improvement in the wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, but everybody in the society. Similarly, Naomi (1995) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life. A country is classified as developed when is able to provide meaningful quality life for her citizenry via good education, improved healthcare delivery, employment opportunities, clean air, safe drinking water and security of life are some of the properties of development that determine the people's quality of life or standard of living (The World Bank Group, 2004). Thus, economic development of any society is a panacea to enhance the good living standard of citizens. Economic development has remained a serial problem bedeviling the Nigerian state since independence as several efforts geared toward economic recovery have failed to yield significant results. Nigeria has been having persistent problems of unemployment, unabated poverty, high mortality rate occasioned by poor health care system, brain drain as a result of poor educational funding, insufficient or lack of critical infrastructures, high inflation rate, and insecurity. World Bank Group, (2004) supported the foregoing that inspite the spirited efforts towards improving the situation by the successive governments, ease access to good education, improved health care delivery, employment opportunities, clean air, safe drinking water and security of life and property which determine the people's high quality of life or good standard of living has been a mirage in Nigeria. In fact, the investigation of the World Bank, (2017) reported

that Nigeria with an estimated population of over 200 million people, more than 70 percent of the citizens live below poverty line. This is plausibly due to the menace of corruption that has emaciated the Nigerian economic emancipation and development since independence. However, Nigerian economy is already cap in hand and been agitated again as a result of the current drip of oil prices below \$20 due to the ravaging corona virus (COVID-19) around the globe. While its economic growth indicators have been good, human development, poverty, and unemployment have been very poor.

The United Nations developed Human Development Index as an important tool to measure economic development that ranks countries' levels of economic development based on three criteria: Health Index, Education Index, and Standard of Living Index. The health index represents life expectancy of a particular country under study. The education index represents the literacy rate and enrolment rate of people in a particular country under study. The standard of living index represents the per capita income of a region or country expressed in US\$ at purchasing power parity (PPP) rate (UNDP, 2018). Between 2005 and 2018, Nigeria's HDI value increased from 0.467 to 0.534, an increase of 14.4 percent (UNDP, 2018). Most disturbing is Nigeria which is Africa's leading economy, is faced with extreme poverty forcing over 100 million (more than 60.9 per cent) people to live on less than a \$1 per day. Regrettably, World Poverty Clock (2018), a project of the World Data Lab which tracks income levels for individuals around the world, had recently named Nigeria the poverty capital of the world with statistics showed that more than 100 million Nigerians are now living in poverty. This is the second year in a row Nigeria has landed in the top spot of the World Poverty Clock overtaken India with the most people living in abject poverty. In the same vein, World Bank Development Indicators (2012) have placed Nigeria within the 47 poorest countries of the world showing that majority of Nigerians are poor with 84.5 per cent of the population living on less than two dollar a day. Similarly, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2004) reported national poverty level was 54.4 per cent, with a total of about 71.3 million people considered poor. Nigeria had one of the world's highest economic growth rates, averaging 7.4% according to the Nigeria economic report released in July 2014 by the World Bank. Following the oil price collapse in 2014-2016, combined with negative production shocks, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate dropped to 2.7% in 2015. In 2016 during its first recession in 25 years, the economy contracted by 1.6%. Poverty remains significant at 33.1% in Africa's biggest economy (NBS, 2017). This is indeed a worrisome threat. The problem of development in Nigeria today is not necessarily as a result of the scarcity of human and/or material resources. The lack or slow development in Nigeria can be attributed to the interminable pursuit among Nigerians to maintain or gain undue advantage(s) over fellow Nigerians. This is the foundation of ethnic politics, the basis for the separation between the elite and non-elite, between the poor and the rich, etc. which usually manifests in the insertion of additional but fraudulent transactions geared towards altering the standard trajectory of events and abusing positions of trust. The result of this can be summed up in one word: "corruption." The pursuit of Nigerians to gain or maintain advantages for themselves over other Nigerians and its resultant manifestation-corruption is the reason why successive governments in Nigeria have left a litany of public and private institutions, frameworks and initiatives to address the menace. Section 46 of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act 2004 also considers corruption to include the following: non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the objective of earning wealth illegally either individually or in a group or organized manner thereby violating existing legislation governing the economic activities of governments and its administration and includes any form of fraud, narcotic drug trafficking, money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting and any form of corrupt practices, illegal arms deals, smuggling, human trafficking and child labour, illegal oil bunkering, illegal mining, tax evasion, foreign exchange malpractices including counterfeiting of currency, theft of intellectual property and piracy, open market abuse, dumping of toxic wastes and prohibited goods, etc.

Whistle blowing has been regarded as a very successful method of exposing unlawful or immoral behavior in businesses, both public and private. Countries, especially the advanced countries, have been able to successfully create a structure that promotes the act of whistle blowing through laid down laws and principles to enhance its process and further protect the act of whistle blowing (Krambia-Kapardis, 2020; Pillay, Kluvers & Reedy, 2011). These countries consider whistle blowing as a fundamental apparatus for combating corruption and encouraging good governance, accountability and transparency in the public sector (Alleyne & Pierce, 2017). The United Kingdom takes the lead in creating this avenue, while other countries such as the United States of America, Australia, Romania, and others later adopt the practice. In Malaysia for instance, the Companies Act of 1965 has provision for auditors a breach or non-compliance with any provision of the Companies Act in the course of the statutory audit which referred to the act as "whistle blowing duty" (Mustapha & Siaw, 2012), thereby emphasizing the level of importance. Consequently, corruption is one of the major factors hindering the economic growth and development of nations. The survey conducted by Transparency International Perception Index chart of 2017 places Nigeria in the 138th position. The survey shows that Nigeria scores below acceptable average. However, the figures show an improvement in the average score of Nigeria to be incremental compared tot what it was in 2013 to 2015 before the introduction of whistle blowing incentives in the Nigeria public sector. Hence, swift actions and mechanisms are required to check this menace (Nwusu, et al., 2020). Whistle blowing becomes imperative and advantageous as a last resort not just for exposing undetectable wrongdoing but also for preventing it (Moyo, 2020). Whistle blowing awareness serves as a catalyst for the improvement of both the

internal organizational processes and the external whistle blowing legal system in South Africa (Pillay, 2014). People who "blow the whistle" on unethical or corrupt behavior work to bring about positive change. In terms of detection, Suyatno (2018) observed that employee whistle blowing is the most successful method of discovering misbehavior since those closest to corporate operations are most equipped to recognize unusual behavior and mishaps, as well as detect corruption. Governments are frustrated and the economic development suffers when public officials engage in unethical and illegal behavior. Once it has infiltrated the bloodstream of any public institution, it permanently damages the organization's moral fiber. Therefore, this study examined whistle blowing and economic development in Nigeria.

However, the introduction of the Federal Ministry of Finance Whistle blowing Programme which is an important feature of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) is, thus, a major milestone for the Nigerian government in its effort to tackle the multifaceted problem of corruption and waste at different levels of governance. Whistleblowing is a critical weapon for combating corruption and corporate crime because it gives a bottom-line evaluation that goals wrongdoing, recovers pilfered funds, and establishes active control over civic and company properties (Okafor, Adebisi, Opara & Okafor, 2020). Whistle blowing is not peculiar to Nigeria. Over fifty countries of the world have enacted national laws of whistle blowing in one form or the other to address the issue of corruption. Some include the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia, Ireland, Jamaica, India, Switzerland, Netherlands, South Africa, New Zealand, India, South Korea, Singapore, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Uganda. Kenya and Rwanda are in the process of enacting whistle blowing laws. Numerous studies examining the role of whistle blowing in Nigeria have concentrated on anticorruption plans that protect whistle blowers or on whistle blowing as an instrument designed for fighting exploitation in the Nigerian administrative system, including Ogunkeye (2016), Oyebade (2016), Omojola (2019), Okafor et al. (2020), Egboh and Akobundu (2020), and Ahmadu (2020). While whistle blowing may be useful in averting corporate crime, there is a lack of data to support this claim. It is against the foregoing background that this study examined whistle blowing and economic development in Nigeria.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The broad aim of this study is to examine the relationship between whistle blowing and economic development in Nigeria with the specific objectives as follows:

- AO1: Investigate the relationship between real gross domestic product and internal whistle-blowing mechanism in Nigeria.
- AO2: Scrutinize the relationship between real gross domestic product and external whistle-blowing mechanism in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

In line with the above aim and objectives, the study asked the following research questions;

- RQ1: What is the relationship between real gross domestic product and internal whistle-blowing mechanism in Nigeria?
- RQ2: Real gross domestic product does not relate to external whistle blowing mechanism in Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study:

- Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between real gross domestic product and internal whistle blowing mechanism in Nigeria
- Ho<sub>2</sub> Real gross domestic product does not significantly relate to external whistle-blowing mechanism in Nigeria.

The remainder of this study examined the literature review, methodology, results and discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

### **Literature Review**

This segment reviewed relevant literature on whistle blowing and economic development consisting of theoretical framework, conceptual review and empirical review as discussed below.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted quality of life theory and routine activities theory.

#### **Quality of Life theory**

In 1962, Abraham Maslow propounded the Quality of Life Theory (QLT) when he published his book *Towards a Psychology of Being*, and established a theory of quality of life, which still is considered a consistent theory of quality of life. Maslow based his theory for development towards happiness and true being on the concept of human needs. He described his approach as an existentialistic psychology of self-actualization, based on personal growth. When we take more responsibility for our own life, we take more of the good qualities that we have into use, and we become more free, powerful, happy, and healthy. Quality of life (QOL) means a good life. A good life is the same as living a life with a high quality. This may seem evident, but it is necessary to make such a simple clarification, because medical jargon often uses very narrow concepts of the quality of life (for example, side effect profiles). Medical advertisements often depict the quality of life as one factor among many,

on a par with other improvements that a certain medical product promises. In this work, the quality of life belongs on the highest, most common level of life. Hass (1999) defined quality of life (QOL) as a multidimensional evaluation of an individual's current life circumstances in the context of the culture in which they live and the values they hold. Quality of life is primarily a subjective sense of well-being encompassing physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. In some circumstances, objective indicators may supplement or, in the case of individuals unable to subjectively perceive, serve as a proxy assessment of quality of life. In Owolabi (2007), quality of life theory asserts that unrestrained industrial production for economic development has not only resulted in increase of social costs in heavy proportions, but also evident in environmental pollution and social ills. It is expected that enhancing the quality of life of the society should be a primary concern and direction of government policies (Schuessler & Fisher, 1985). From the foregoing, this study was anchored on the quality of life theory. The major concern of quality of life theory is primarily targeted on the wellbeing of the people in the society in terms of their standard of living condition, education attainment, health condition, and poverty level etc. One way is to view sustainability in terms of inter-generational equity, which effectively requires that present and future generations should have the same opportunity to achieve basic well-being (Anand & Sen 2000). The most influential well-being concept was done by Amartya et al (1992). Based on his conceptualization, multidimensional measures were produced by combining various kinds of social indicators. The most successful and widely used composite indicator is Human Development Index (HDI), which was developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1990. HDI combines income; life expectancy, adult literacy, and school enrollment which therefore, enhance the quality of life of people therein (Bassey et al, 2013).

### **Routine Activities Theory**

Cohen and Felson (1979) opined that three elements must converge for a crime to occur. These elements are; a motivated offender with criminal intentions who has the ability to act on these inclinations, a suitable victim or target and the absence of a capable guardian who can prevent the crime from happening. Therefore, whistle blowing as a technique to combat corruption seek to ensure that everyone becomes a guardian that tries to prevent crime. The nature of the civil service is such that it allows public officials access to funds earmarked for national developmental projects. Thus, public officials are likely to have the inclination of diverting the monies for these projects to their personal purse due to the staggering sums allocated for some of these projects. In light of this level of temptation as public office holders, the whistle blowing policy seeks to be a constraint, thereby, militating against all forms of corrupt practices in the system. This theory however fails to explain the impact of the whistle blowing policy on development. But it effectively explains the adoption of the whistle blowing policy as an anticorruption technique in Nigeria.

### **Concept Framework**

#### **Economic Development**

Economic development is a policy intervention efforts targeted at the economic and social well-being of people (Salmon Valley Business Innovation Centre, 2014). It is the development of economic wealth of countries or regions for the well-being of their dwellers. From a policy perspective, economic development can be defined as efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating jobs and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base. Economic development implies improvements in a variety of indicators such as literacy rates, life expectancy, and poverty rates. This means that its concern is on improvement in the quality of life of people, introduction of new goods and services using modern technological, mitigation of risk and dynamics of innovation and entrepreneurship (Hadjimichael *et al.*, 2014). The objective of sustainable economic development is to create an enabling environment for local communities and regions to develop new ways of production of goods in such quantities that may lead to exportation to other countries. Availability of financial resources from exportation leads to more investment in infrastructure for the benefit of the society and improvement in living conditions of the people, in education, transportation networks, health conditions, water supply, sewage and sanitation conditions (SVBIC, 2014). The changes create the conditions for long-run economic growth by positioning the economy on a higher growth trajectory (Hadjimichael et al, 2014). Economic development differs from economic growth. Economic growth specifically means an increase in the value of goods and services produced by a country over a period and Economists use an increase in country's GDP to measure it. Thus, it is possible to have economic growth without economic development in the short or even medium term (Hadjimichael et al, 2014).

In other words, there could be an increase in GDP without any increase in standard of living of people in a state. Environmental and social conditions that would enhance economic growth must be created through an investment of the national income in infrastructural development for subsequently improvement in the standard of life of the population of a country (Wilkins & Zarawski, 2014). Writers use economic growth and development interchangeably and also use GDP as measurement indicator for both. However, since the two are differentiated, any attempt to use GDP as a measure for the two gives incorrect result on economic development. Robert et al, (2009) emphasize the need for a new measure of progress in the well-being of people, arguing that GDP is not a good measure because economic growth is not synonymous with improved well-being. Gboyega (2003) captures sustainable economic development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material well being of all citizens,

not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future. It also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances. Similarly, Naomi (1995) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life. Development is imbued with people's imageries and visions of a better life - a life which is materially enriched, ecologically improved, institutionally well-organized and technologically more advanced. According to Eugene & Eme (2014), the main goal of development is to improve the living conditions and material standing of the populace. For the purposes of this study, real gross domestic product growth rate was used as a measure of economic development.

### Real Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate

The organisation for economic co-operation and development (OECD) defines GDP as an aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross value added of all resident and institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus any subsidies, on products not included in the value of their outputs). From the extant literatures, a country's economic growth is measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while the level of welfare of people is measured by per capita income. That is, GDP as a ratio of the country's total population. It is conventionally measured as the percent rate of increase in real gross domestic product, or real GDP (Onuoha et al, 2015). In a more concise explanation, economic growth is an increase in the production of goods and services over a specific period, especially a year. In real money terms, the measurement must remove the effects of inflation from its computation. With good levels of economic growth, businesses will be more profitable as such, stock prices will be on the increase. Thus, economic growth is the increase in the inflation-adjusted market value of the goods and services produced by an economy over time. The access of a nation to international finance as well as foreign financial institution taking risk for Letters of Credits, transactions is informed by the level of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. Nations in the world look at the indices that contribute to the growth of GDP for proper planning and harnessing of resources. This gave rise to various economic reforms all over the world that were aimed at trying to boost their economies. Elebiju (2007) mentioned that employment, taxes and investments are paramount in growing the gross domestic product of any nation. This position makes tax as a tool for raising fund for government functions to be more important. Some questions to answer include whether we are currently raising enough fund through taxes to grow our economy. An international monetary fund (IMF, 2017) publication states that "GDP measures the monetary value of final goods and services - that is, those that are bought by the final user - produced in a country in a given period of time (say a quarter or a year)". Total GDP can also be broken down into the contribution of each industry or sector of the economy. The ratio of GDP to the total population of the region is the per capita GDP and the same is called Mean Standard of Living. GDP is considered the "world's most powerful statistical indicator of national development and progress. The gross domestic product (GDP) is one of the primary indicators used to gauge the health of a country's economy. It represents the total dollar value of all goods and services produced over a specific time period; you can think of it as the size of the economy. Usually, GDP is expressed as a comparison to the previous quarter or year.

For example, the Q3 2017 GDP is up 3%, this is thought to mean that the economy has grown by 3% over the third quarter. While quarterly growth rates are a periodic measure of how the economy is faring, annual GDP figures are often considered the benchmark for the size of the economy. Nigeria Economic Outlook (2018), expressed that much is needed to be explored in the area of taxation as our tax to gross domestic product is 6% as mentioned by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2017). The report of World Bank Group (WBG) in 2018 stated that growth in advanced economies is predicted to decelerate their economies especially USA by adjusting towards monetary policy and fiscal stimulus. The report mentions that emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) will rebound in commodity exporters while progress in per capita income growth will be subdued in Sub-Sahara Africa. This shows a lot of concerns for the economic growth in developing countries as business outlooks are subjected to various risks. Trade protectionism has increased substantially and risks of disorderly financial market movements heightened the geopolitical tensions. Trade protections constrained individual countries to look inwards in achieving economic growth. This has potentials for decline in economic growth of the nations. The study of Siyanbola et al, (2017) on sub-Saharan Africa shows that there is positive effect of tax incentives on industrial and economic growth of the region.

There are many different ways to measure a country's GDP, they include:

**Nominal GDP:** This is the raw measurement that includes price increases. The Bureau of Economic Analysis measures nominal GDP quarterly. It revises the quarterly estimate each month as it receives updated data.

**Real GDP:** To compare economic output from one year to another, you must account for the effects of inflation. To do this, the NBS calculates real GDP. It does this by using a price deflator. It tells you how much prices have changed since a base year.

**Growth Rate:** The GDP growth rate is the percentage increase in GDP from quarter to quarter. It tells you exactly how fast a country's economy is growing. Most countries use real GDP to remove the effect of inflation.

**GDP per Capita:** This is the best way to compare gross domestic product between countries. That's because some countries have enormous economic outputs because they have so many people. To get a more accurate

picture, it's helpful to use GDP per capita. This divides gross domestic product by the number of residents. It is a good measure of the country's standard of living. The best way to compare gross domestic product by year and between countries is with real GDP per capita. This takes out the effects of inflation, exchange rates and differences in population. The different measures of GDP are great tools for comparing the economies of other countries or how an economy changes over time. When economists talk about the "size" of an economy, they are referring to GDP. In 2007, the United States lost its position as the world's largest economy (IMF, 2007). The growth rate measures whether the economy is growing more quickly or more slowly than the quarter before. If it produces less than the quarter before, it contracts and the growth rate is negative. This signals a recession. If it stays negative for a long period, the recession turns into a depression. As bad as a recession is, one also don't want the growth rate to be too high. Then it will lead to inflation. The ideal growth rate is between 2 per cent to 3 per cent.

### **Whistle Blowing**

Whistle blowing is the act of drawing public attention, or the attention of an authority figure, to perceived wrongdoing, misconduct, unethical activity within public, private or third-sector organisations. The term, whistle blowing is thought to have its roots in two different but related activities: first, the term follows from the practice of police or Bobbies who blew their whistles when attempting to apprehend a suspected criminal; secondly, it is the practice of referees during sporting events who blow their whistle to stop an action (Miceli & Near, 2022). The basic assumption in both cases is that the whistleblower perceives something that he or she believes to be unethical or illegal and reports it to the relevant authorities so that corrective measures may be taken, Danladi (2022). According to Mohammed (2022), whistle-blowers are persons (usually workers) who at their own risk, having been motivated by a sense of personal, and 'or public duty, may expose what they perceive as specific instances of wrongdoing, which may be within the private and/or public sector. A whistleblower is a person who tells the public or someone in authority about alleged dishonest, or illegal activities occurring in a government department, a public or private organization or a company. The alleged misconduct may be classified in several ways; a violation of law, regulation and or a direct threat to the public interest such as fraud, health safety violation and corruption (Kim, 2022). Whistle blowing can also be described as a moral obligation of all committed members of an organization, community or state to expose violations or acts of corruption that are likely to undermine progress or the pursuit of common good, Choi (2022). Although the ethical issues in whistle blowing may be difficult to interrogate and continue to inspire rigorous debate among pundits, the truth is that regardless of whether the whistle blower is motivated by altruistic or selfish concerns, the act is not without risks. According to Suleiman (2022), whistle blowers are vulnerable not only to organizational reprisal but also to chastisement at the hands of other organizational members who may react and most likely show retaliation against the whistle blower. Thus, whistle blowing is not a risk-free decision or initiative for any individual, as it can entail direct and unanticipated consequences for the person raising a voice against some wrongdoing. In that regard, the success of every whistle blowing policy is hinged on how well it is able to preserve the integrity of the process so that it is not misused as a tool for vengeance ('witch-hunting') or undermined through the victimization and stigmatization of the individuals who report unethical or fraudulent conduct, Audu (2022). Indeed, the use of whistle blowing as a slogan to describe the reporting of wrongdoing in organizations is attributed to Ralph Nader, a renowned American scholar and political activist, who coined the phrase in the early 70's to avoid the use of other negative connotations found in existing literature at the time, such as "informers" and "snitches" (Garba, 2022). However, while the use of the phrase is relatively modern, the practice is not. The concept of whistle blowing on behalf of one's government dates back to 7th century England, and precisely to the declaration of King Wihtred of Kent in 695 that; "If a freeman works during the Sabbath, he shall forfeit his profit, and the man who informs against him shall have half the fine, and the profiles of the labor." This declaration represents the first example of a law that allows private individuals to collect a bounty for reporting a violation of their country's legislation (Yang, 2023). Since then, the practice and culture of whistle blowing has grown all over the world.

### **International Protection of Whistleblower**

Global and regional protection of whistleblowers highlights the increasing importance that the international community place on whistleblowing as an anti-corruption tool. The Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACC) which is the first inter-governmental agreement to tackle whistleblower protection stress the importance of whistleblower protection as an anti-corruption tool. Member States are enjoined to establish and strengthen mechanisms protecting persons who disclose corrupt practices. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), enjoins State Parties to take domestic measures to incorporate in their legislations and other provisions protection of whistleblower, witnesses and their families from any unwarranted treatment. The countries are also urged to set in place measures that facilitate reporting of corruption to appropriate agencies. It further states in article 32 that State Parties provide effective mechanism for protecting witnesses who disclose wrongdoing and their relatives from actual or potential harassment, retaliation or intimidation. The Council of Europe Civil and Criminal Law Conventions on Corruption states in its Civil Law Convention that "each Party shall provide in its internal law for appropriate protection against any unjustified sanction for employees who have reasonable grounds to suspect corruption and who report in good faith their suspicion to responsible persons or authorities." The African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPC 2003) in its preamble recognizes the detrimental effects that corruption has on the stability

of African countries and its peoples. It noted the potential of whistleblowing as an anti- corruption mechanism and enjoins States to adopt legislative measures to punish those who make false and malicious reports against innocent persons in corruption and related offenses.

### **Domestic Protection of Whistleblower**

There are national legislations and policies that have provisions protecting a whistleblower. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in section 27 protects public officers from criminal and civil proceedings for disclosures made in good faith. The information volunteered can be in respect of financial crime, abuse of authority, violation of laws and danger to health and safety. The public officer however is still at risk of suspension or demotions and even bodily danger as a result of making a disclosure. It is noteworthy that the FOI Act does not extend protection to private sector workers. The Terrorism (Prevention) Amendment Act 2013 in section 33 provides for the protection of the identity and life of a person who gives information to law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting offences under the Act. It provides that reasonable measures to protect the identity and life of that person and the information volunteered shall be treated as confidential.' It is doubtful that a whistleblower who volunteers information not related to specific terrorism issues will be protected by the Act. Section 64 of the independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) Act 2009 provides that the information and the identity of a person from whom information is received by an officer of the commission shall be kept secret between them and all other circumstances relating to the information. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in its Guidelines for Whistleblowing for Banks and Discount Houses in section 5.3.1 states that Banks shall have a whistleblowing policy made known to employees and other stakeholders. It states further that the policy shall contain mechanisms, including assurance of confidentiality that encourage all stakeholders to report any unethical activity to the bank and/or the CBN. The whistleblower takes personal risks in exposing corruption. It is very important to have a comprehensive whistleblower legislative framework to sustain the success of the policy. As rightly noted by Banisar, the enactment of a comprehensive, dedicated law will serve as an effective legislative means of providing whistleblower protection because it will give the law visibility, thereby making the promotion of the law easier for governments and organisations. He noted further that a dedicated legislation will allow for the same law and regulation to apply to both public and private sector employees. The enactment of a dedicated whistleblower protection legislation will also ensure clarity because types of impropriety that can be reported will be specified in the Act.

### **Whistle-blowing Policy in Nigeria**

Whistle-blowing Policy in Nigeria is an anti-corruption programme that encourages people to voluntarily disclose information about fraud, bribery, looted government funds, financial misconduct, government assets and any other form of corruption or theft to the Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Finance. A whistle-blower who provides information about any financial mismanagement or tip about any stolen funds to the ministry's portal is rewarded or entitled to 2.5% - 5% percentage from the recovered funds by the Nigeria government. The policy was launched on December 21, 2016 by Nigeria's Federal Government and facilitated through the Federal Ministry of Finance.

### **Appraisal of Whistleblowing Policy in Nigeria**

Despite the fact that there is no law that presently guarantees the protection of whistleblowers in Nigeria, some patriot Nigerians have provided valuable information that led to the recovery of funds, arrest and prosecution of guilty parties. So far, the actual amount of money recovered through whistleblowers' information is not known. However, in 2017, the government disclosed that more than \$160 million (US dollars) have been recovered through whistleblowing policy (Jannah, 2017). In addition, record of recoveries reported in the media revealed that on February 3rd, 2017, the EFCC raided an apartment in Kanuna State, following a whistleblower's information, where a sum of \$9.2 million (US dollars) was found. Similarly, on April 10th 2017, N250 million (Naira) was found in an abandoned shop in Lagos. Also, on April 13th 2017, \$43 million, N23 million and £27,000 was found in a building at Osborne Tower in Ikoyi, Lagos (Vanguard News, 2017, Ibrahim, 2017, Akinkuotu, 2017, Akinkuotu and Godwin, 2017, Akinkuotu, 2017). Whistleblowing policy appears to be an effective instrument for uncovering and fighting corrupt practices in Nigeria. The recovery of looted resources through whistleblowers' information gives the impression that there is hope in the fight against corrupt practices that have distorted the growth and development of Nigeria. However, there is a need for the policy to have legal support for it to be sustained. Also, the policy could be further strengthened through adherence to the established guidelines for the implementation of whistleblowing and protection of whistleblowers as highlighted in the African Union Convention against Corruption, United Nation Convention against Corruption, and whistleblowing policy instructions of the Transparency International. However, one important thing stakeholders should be wary of, is the 'politicisation' of the policy. It is not a secret that everything in Nigeria is laced in politics, including the "fight against corruption" itself (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Allowing politics to play into the implementation of the policy could result in a new form of corruption and malicious trial. Desperate politicians could sponsor some group of people to disclose false information in order to stain the image of their oppositions. Moreover, the promise of financial reward could also motivate some opportunists who want to exploit the situation for their own benefit to engage in malicious reporting thereby resulting in unfair treatment of innocent persons. Accordingly, reported cases of corruption should be objectively traced



regardless of status, ethnicity, or political affiliation of the people involved. In addition, whistleblowers' anonymity should be adequately protected, even from some officers of the anti-graft agencies. Due to the systemic nature of corruption, no one can be trusted with whistleblowers' details. These agencies may have been compromised or infiltrated by moles who are ready to reveal (or sell) information about the whistleblowers to the third-party. Finally, it is important that the principles of sincerity and transparency are applied in giving rewards to the whistleblowers, this will encourage people to come forward to unveil information about financial irregularities. However, people should be enlightened that public interest comes first and it is above the rewards or personal interest. Whistleblowing or revealing information about misconducts should, therefore, be seen as moral responsibility.

### **Challenges of Blowing the Whistle in Nigeria.**

Ifejika (2018) describes the challenges facing the whistle blower as the 'other side effects' in his discourse. The other side effects faced by the whistle-blower manifest as victimization, witch-hunting, retaliation, denial of related benefits, recrimination, suspension from work and worst still, outright dismissal from service by the employer. The author further posits that the whistle-blower who in good faith and public spirit seeks to protect the society from wastages are in most cases branded as trouble makers, informants, snitchers or tale bearers who must pay for their actions. These challenges depict that corruption is fighting back. Curtis (2006 as cited in Onodugo 2014) asserts that the personal risks and cost of blowing the whistle include lack of peer support, transfer to undesirable posts or jobs and firing. Onodugo (2014) also added threats to life (late Dele Giwa was letter bombed during Babangida's regime), loss of income and time in litigation, loss of reputation to the firm, and the psychological dilemma in the whistle blowers' mind. To buttress the heavy cost borne by the whistle-blower in Nigeria, notorious instances of victimizations, reprisals, denials, suspensions and dismissals are succinctly captured according to Ifejika (2018) study. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs unlawfully suspended Assistant Director from work for exposing a financial fraud to the tune of N70.6 million in the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA). In the same vein, Mr. Nita Thompson was the whistle-blower who reported the matter to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Inspector General of Police seeking for possible action as well as necessary protection. An awful incidence in this case was that, police reported that Mr. Thompson was not under serious threat and should not be given special protection. Another case was that of Mrs. Fatima Bamidele, the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Niger Delta was under serious threat for uncovering the fraud involving the sum of N803,000,000.00 by staff of same ministry to Economic and Financial Crimes Committee (EFCC). Similarly, Mr. Aaron Akase, a staff of Police Service Commission blew the whistle to uncover alleged fraud in the commission roping the management was thoroughly humiliated, suspended indefinitely without salaries with serious threats to life and family. Also, a former House of Representative and chairman, Appropriation committee was suspended from the House for revealing that the 2018 national budget was padded to the public. Furthermore, the former Central Bank of Nigerian (CBN) governor, Mr Sanusi Lamido Sanusi was unceremoniously suspended from office because he blew the whistle over alleged disappearance of the sum of \$20 billion from the public treasury. It was equally reported in August, 2011 that, a staff of the National Women Development Centre Abuja, who revealed the alleged embezzlement of N300 million meant for poverty alleviation but diverted by top members at the centre was unlawfully dismissed from service. With these practical cases, the whistle-blowing policy is indeed a 'double-edged sword' because the whistle-blower's life, is in grave danger. The danger to life, family and job are the dilemmas facing the whistle blower in an unsecured society. The 2.5% - 5.0% reward package does not worth the endangered life of the whistle-blower. It therefore stands that the whistle-blower is not motivated by the monetized incentives but for the inherent morals and faith energized by cultural norms and values and public good. The reward may be adjudged as a secondary and necessary factor for service done to humanity. Wasiu (2018) also enumerated five challenges confronting the whistle-blowing policy in Nigeria such as lack of appropriate laws, prolonged prosecution of accused persons, lack of continuity in government policies and the unstable political terrain in the country. Ifejika (2018) supported the arguments of Wasiu (2018) that, the unwarranted abuses and maltreatments of whistle-blowers is caused by lack of protection law, indifference to good governance and no political will to combat corruption head long. The implications are that, whistleblowers are discouraged and the citizens will lose confidence in the government and if care is not taken, corruption and corrupt people will defeat the genuine efforts of government.

### **Dimensions of Whistle Blowing**

Whistle blowing has been classified into the following types: Internal , External, Third Party, Private Sector and Public Sector. For the purpose of this study, internal Channel, external channel and public channels were used as proxies of whistle blowing system.

### **Internal whistle blowing Mechanism**

Whistle-blowing is "the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action" (Near & Miceli, 1985).

This definition is used by most researchers (Miceli, Dreyfus, & Near, 2014; Bjorkelo & Bye, 2014). It allows the phenomenon "whistleblowing" to be investigated in all individual aspects and their variations (Miceli et al., 2014). In the political debate and the legal and economic literature, there are several other approaches towards a



definition (Ciasullo et al., 2017), essentially paraphrasing the definition by Near and Miceli (Lewis, Brown, & Moberly, 2014). Each of these definitions points out a different aspect of the phenomenon “whistleblowing”. Even the understanding of the very term “whistleblowing” varies in particular societies and cultures (Vandekerckhove, Uys, Rehg, & Brown, 2014). Focusing on a single aspect of the phenomenon alternatively proposed definitions are, however, often influenced by assessments of whistleblowing behaviour, the desirability of whistleblowing, or the person who blows the whistle itself (Lewis et al., 2014). For these reasons, and because the focus of this contribution lies in internal whistleblowing systems and not on aspects within the framework of the whistleblowing definition, no new definition will be developed here. A whistleblower, as defined above, is a person within an organization who reports an instance of maladministration perceived in the organization to a person or organization who is able to effect action. The recipient of the information must therefore be in a position to possibly take action against the reported instance of maladministration. This can be a person or organization outside the organization where the instance of maladministration was noticed, such as law enforcement agencies, government agencies, or even the media. Alternatively, the person deciding to blow the whistle may address a person or designated department within the organization concerned. This review focuses exclusively on the factors of blowing the whistle inside of the organization concerned. Thus, within the definition of whistleblowing we focus on those who use internal channels to blow the whistle, and not external channels (e.g., to the media). Internal whistleblowing channels are designed to receive reports of alleged illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices within the organization, whereby employers retain control over the information received. To fall under the term of internal whistleblowing, the reporting of misconduct must take place outside the regular hierarchy, for example, via confidential hotlines. In addition or alternative to a confidential hotline, an internal whistleblowing system can also consist of an ombudsperson or the organizations’ compliance or audit department as recipient of whistleblowing reports.

### **External whistle blowing Mechanism**

It involves reporting internal misconduct to or exposing illegal and corrupt activity within an organization to a person, body or entity outside that organization. These may include lawyers, media, law enforcement agencies and watchdog agencies/ civil society in general. - Not directly involved in a company/organization but report their actions to entities such as the media, law enforcement, and watchdog agencies. Whichever group we tend to classify as a whistle blower, whether as internal or external, the underlining factor usually common to both is the need to preserve the ‘public interest’. For external whistle blowing, Ferguson suggests that using an external system means relinquishing some control, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. It would definitely be more comfortable. The report may be made to a regulatory body or a supervisory agency. This would include governmental agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) or the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria. The risks associated with external whistle blowing would only arise where the third party or ‘external body’ is so closely inter-related with the concerned organization that it loses the objectiveness of a truly external body

### **Empirical Review**

Sani, Salim, Mohanadasc, Yaakup and Azmane (2020) investigated the effect inspiration of specific features on future internal auditors' whistleblowing intents. Their research focused on three factors that influence behaviour: self-efficacy, empathy, and psychological safety. 193 accounting degree graduates completed the self-administered questionnaire, and results were analyzed using Smart-PLS software. The findings of the study indicated that self-efficacy and responsiveness had a substantial effect on the intention of whistleblowers.

Ulfah, Irwansyah, Ikbah, Paminto and Darma (2020) examined several factors that may influence the reporting of fraud (whistleblowing) within an organization to responsible individuals in order to determine the reporting channel preference, whether internal or external. They collected data and hypotheses using survey letters and direct messages (DM) via public media linked to social media. Through a survey of 2,214 government officials from Indonesia's regencies, cities, and provinces. The results indicated that the association between whistleblowing, specific, and ecological dynamics all play a substantial role in determining how public workers in Indonesia choose to disclose.

Additionally, it was shown that fear of reprisal was more prevalent (stronger) than public service motivation, resulting in unfavorable and negligible chances for alternate whistleblower reporting channels. Edih (2020) investigated the economic gains, prospects, and challenges associated with Nigeria's whistleblowing policy. Qualitative deductions from secondary data were utilized as the technique in the study. According to the analysis, the policy elicited 5,000 tips, resulting in the recovery of many billions of naira. Additionally, it was found that no law existed to protect whistleblowers from victimization and recriminations.

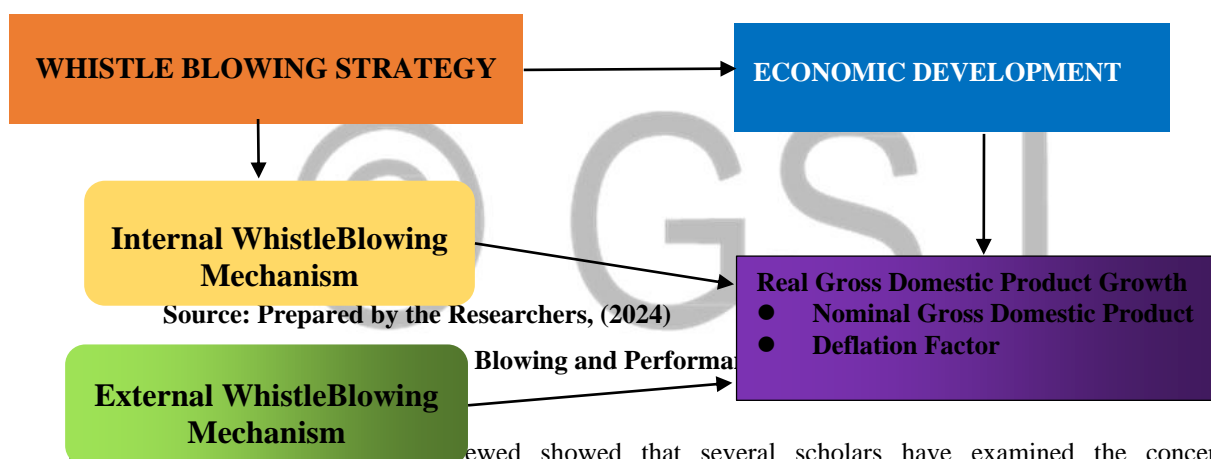
Egboh and Akobundu (2020) investigated the role of whistleblowing policies in combating corruption. The Key Informant Interview (KII) technique was used to interview several highprofile and senior staff members of the EFCC, ICPC, and the Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF). The Nvivo Software was utilized to scrutinize and interpret the data in their study, which resulted in significant discoveries. The findings indicated that whistle blowing policies have been important in combating exploitation and other illegal activity in both the civic and commercial sectors, since they foster a culture of transparency and openness.

Salish (2019) examined the impact of the whistleblowing policy on combatting corruption in Nigeria. Looking at the short period since the policy was implemented, the study sought to determine if it had been successful in the discovery and recovery of public funds and in the prosecution of those responsible. The research found that the policy had not been supported by appropriate legislation, leading to the conclusion that for it to be successful, the Whistleblower Protection Bill needs to be passed into law. This will provide protection for those who report corruption and give them the confidence to disclose more information.

Adetula and Amupitan (2018) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of whistleblowing as a tool to combat fraud, forgery, and corruption in Nigeria. They collected data from both primary and secondary sources and applied mean, standard deviation, regression, and Pearson correlations for analysis. The result of the study indicated that while whistleblowing is generally accepted and recognized globally as a tool to reduce fraud, forgery, and corruption, it is still in its early stages in Nigeria. Thus, the study recommended increasing the strength of whistleblowing to make it an effective tool for addressing fraud, corruption, and forgery.

Omojola (2019) looks into the possibility of whistleblowing protection to help reduce corruption in Nigeria and the longevity of the policy's success. The study was conducted to assess if the whistleblowing policy, which was recently implemented, was able to protect whistleblowers and prevent corruption. The results show that a strong legal system is necessary for the protection of whistleblowers in order for the whistleblowing policy to be successful.

Ogbomo (2019) conducted a study to evaluate the success of whistleblowing policies in fighting corruption in the public sector of Nigeria, using Delta, Edo, Enugu, and Anambra States as case studies. Survey research was used as the method of data collection, and 264 respondents were chosen using a Judgmental Sampling Technique (JST). Descriptive statistical techniques such as charts, means, standard deviations, tables, and percentages response analysis were used to analyze the data. The reliability of the research instrument was tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, with a result of 0.7110. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was employed to test the hypothesis, and SPSS 23.0 was used. The findings suggested that whistleblowing policies are effective in combating corruption in the public sector.



Reviewed showed that several scholars have examined the concept of whistleblowing. Studies such as Egboh and Akobundu (2020), Ogbomo (2019), Mukonya and Tadu (2016), Ulfah, Irwansyah, Ikkal, Paminto and Darma (2020), among other studies. These numerous studies examined the role of whistleblowing a tool in fighting against corruption or as an anti-corruption plan protection. Even yet, there is a dearth of research on the topic of whistleblowing as a means of preventing corporate criminality. The researcher is unaware of any previous empirical studies in Nigeria that have looked at the usefulness of whistleblowing in preventing corporate crime. Furthermore, the empirical review showed mixed results on the relationship between whistle blowing and performance of public sector. Most of the researches were foreign based with mixed findings. The broad international findings may not be applicable in Nigeria as research methods and results are influenced by and usually reflect economic, social or legal factors unique to those countries in which the studies took place. Since most of the studies failed to show the internal and external dimensions of whistle blowing, therefore this research address to fill those gaps.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed research designs. This was adopted because it allows for a deeper exploration of a research question by utilizing a blend of qualitative and quantitative data. Thus, primary and secondary data were employed. Hence, data were collected from primary sources via structured questionnaire distributed to the target respondents. Secondary data was obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin. The population of the study for this research comprises 85 participants of the Federal Ministries and parastatal in Nigeria. A random sampling technique was employed, and the target participants are the workers who provided information used for the study. The reliability and validity of the research instrument was tested using the Cronbach alpha. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents using an online survey due to the dispersed locations for conveniences and the collected data was analyzed using multivariate regression model via SPSS 27.

**Model Specification**

In line with the conceptual frame work and hypotheses stated earlier, data collected for this study was analyzed using a multiple regression technique. This study adopted the econometric model as put forward by Roychowdhury (2006); Cheng and Warfield (2005); and Ofurum and Aliyu, (2018). Thus, the following regression equations are the functional form of our model as given.

**Functional form of the model:**

$$RGDPG = f(IWBM + EWBM) \dots\dots\dots 1$$

The above functional equations are trans-modified into mathematical form by adding constant term ( $\alpha_0$ ), and slope ( $\alpha_1 - \alpha_2$ ) in the model below:

**Mathematical form of the model:**

$$RGDPG = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 IWBM + \alpha_2 EWBM \dots\dots\dots 2$$

The above mathematical equations are trans-modified into econometric form by adding constant term ( $\alpha_0$ ) slope ( $\alpha_1 - \alpha_2$ ) and error term ( $\epsilon$ ) in the model below:

**Econometric form of the Model:**

$$RGDPGR = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 IWBM + \alpha_2 EWBM + \epsilon \dots\dots 3$$

Where:

RGDPG = Real Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate

IWBM = Internal Whistle Blow Mechanism

EWBM = External Whistle Blow Mechanism

$\alpha_0$  = Constants

$\alpha_1 - \alpha_2$  = Coefficient of predictor variables

$\epsilon$  = Error terms

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the data collected through structured questionnaire, data analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science version 27, interpretation and discussion of findings.

**Table 1. Reliability Statistics Results**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.793	.793	3

**Source: SPSS 27 Output of Research Data, 2024**

Constructs of multi-item scale were tested by Cronbach Alpha with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 to measure the reliability of the data. The higher the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Thus, a Cronbach Alpha of 0.793 based on Standardized items suggests an indication that the research instrument's scale and the items, to a large extent, exhibit high internal consistency as shown in table above. This implies that the internal consistency of the measures used in this study can be considered good for constructs.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistical analysis conducted by the study included frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Results**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internal Whistle Blowing Mechanism	4.65	7.56	9.42	1.76
Internal Whistle Blowing Mechanism	5.59	5.28	8.79	1.97
Real Gross Domestic Product Growth	2.54	2.82	4.25	2.94

**Source: SPSS 27 Output of Research Data, 2024**

The above table 2 indicated that the all the variables have an average of 9.42, 8.79, and 4.25 with a minimum of 4.65, 5.59 and 2.54 respectively. They also have standard deviation of 1.76, 1.97 and 2.94 respectively.

**Correlation Analysis**

Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was conducted with the aid of Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 27 to investigate the relationship whistle blowing and performance of public sector in Nigeria as presented in table below.

**Table 3. Correlation Results.**

Variables		IWBM	EWBM	RGDPG
IWBM	Pearson Correlation	.965**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		
EWBM	Pearson Correlation	.963**	.978**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.012	
RGDPG	Pearson Correlation	.910*	.902*	.876**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002	.025

Source: SPSS 27 Output of Research Data, 2024

This study adopted Cohen’s (1998) guideline,  $r = 0.10$  to  $0.29$  for a weak correlation,  $r = 0.30$  to  $0.49$  for a moderate correlation, and  $r = 0.50$  to  $1.0$  for a strong correlation for interpreting the result of the analysis. In table 3, the correlation results of whistle blowing in the dimensions of IWBM (internal whistle blowing mechanism) and EWBM (external whistle blowing mechanism), revealed strong effective relationship with RGDPG(real gross domestic product growth) as flagged by the coefficients of ( $r = 0.910$  &  $0.902$ ) respectively. This suggests that all the variables of whistle blowing could improve performance of the public sector during the period of this study.

### Regression Analysis

Multiple regression model was adopted and employed for the analysis to know the actual relationship between the predictor and criterion variables of the study. The statistics tested include regression equation for the variables, coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), t-test, f-test statistics among others. The Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used to run the analysis.

Table 4: Multivariate Regression Results

Variables	Standardized Coefficient $\beta$	t-statistic	P-value
IWBM	0.971	8.432	0.001
EWBM	0.889	5.971	0.010
<b><math>R^2 = 0.95</math>    Adj <math>R^2 = 0.82</math>    F = 10.0121(0.002)</b>			

\*Significant at 5% (0.05) level of significance

Source: Prepared by the Authors (2024) via SPSS 27

The result of the multivariate regression presented in table 4 explains the empirical statistical relationship between the dependent variable (real gross domestic product growth) and the independent variables. The explanatory power  $R^2$  of the regression model shows that IWBM and EWBM revealed strong ability to predict performance of public sector proxy – real gross domestic product growth as accounted for about 95% of the cross sectional variations in the dependent variable of **RGDPG**. This implies that the remaining 5% variation in **RGDPG** cannot be explained because it may be related to other variables which are not depicted in this model. The implication is that there may be number of variables which can have effect on performance of public sector in Nigeria that needs to be studied. Adjusted  $R^2$  tells how well the data points fit a regression line showing the percentage of variation explained only by the independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable. A value of 0.82 in this study indicates true 82% of variation in the outcome variable is explained by the predictors in the model. The F-ratio in the ANOVA tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables proxies statistically and significantly predict the dependent variable,  $F = 10.0121$ ,  $p(0.002) < .05$  (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data).

The coefficients model displays positive effect of whistle blowing and performance of public sector in Nigeria. Moreso, the coefficient value of ( $r = 0.971$  &  $0.889$ ) for IWBM & EWBM means that a unit change in IWBM & EWBM will improve RGDPG by about 0.971 & 0.889 respectively. Their overall P-values (0.001 & 0.010,) are all found to be statistically significant since they are less than standard alpha (0.05) level.

Table 6. Summary of the Findings

HO:	Null Hypotheses	Standardized Coefficients	P-Value	Relationship	Decision

<b>Ho<sub>1</sub></b>	IWBM & RGDPG	0.971	0.001	Positive and significant	Reject
<b>Ho<sub>2</sub></b>	EWBM & RGDPG	0.889	0.010	Positive and significant	Reject

**Source: Prepared by the Authors (2024) via SPSS 27**

### Discussion of Findings

The study examined the relationship whistle blowing and performance of public sector in Nigeria. The findings of this study are discussed as follows:

#### Internal Whistle Blowing Mechanism and Real Gross Domestic Product Growth

Whistle blowing statistically relates with the performance of public sector in the period of this study. Based on the hypotheses tested, it was established that multivariate regression results in table 5 indicated that whistle blowing in the perspective of internal whistle blowing mechanism had a positive and statistical significant influence the real gross domestic product growth with ( $\beta = 0.971, P = 001$ ). This finding has demonstrated that the Federal Ministries and parastatal of had adequate and effective used their staff to disclose the wrong doings and corruptible acts of their colleagues to the appropriate authority as whistle blowing policies and procedures were rightly implemented internally. Thus, HO<sub>1</sub> was rejected implying that internal whistle mechanism has influence on the real gross domestic product growth of Nigerian public sector in the period of this study. This finding is in tandem with the findings by Ulfah, Irwansyah, Ikbal, Paminto and Darma (2020) that examined several factors that may influence the reporting of fraud (whistleblowing) within an organization to responsible individuals in order to determine the reporting channel preference, whether internal or external. The results indicated that the association between whistleblowing, specific, and ecological dynamics all play a substantial role in determining how public workers in Indonesia choose to disclose.

#### External Whistle Blowing Mechanism and Real Gross Domestic Product Growth

Whistle blowing statistically relates with the performance of public sector in the period of this study. From the hypotheses tested, it was shown that multivariate regression results in table 5 indicated that whistle blowing in the perspective of external whistle blowing mechanism had a positive and statistical significant influence the real gross domestic product growth with ( $\beta = 0.889, P = 010$ ). This finding has proved that the Federal Ministries and parastatal of Nigeria had adequately and effectively used their staff to disclose the misconducts and corruptible acts of their colleagues to the appropriate media, law enforcement agencies, anti-corruption agencies (EFCC, & ICPC) as whistle blowing policies and procedures were rightly carried out externally. Thus, HO<sub>1</sub> was rejected implying that external whistle mechanism has influence on the real gross domestic product growth of Nigerian public sector in the period of this study. This finding is in tandem with the findings by Ogbomo (2019) who conducted a study to evaluate the success of whistleblowing policies in fighting corruption in the public sector of Nigeria, using Delta, Edo, Enugu, and Anambra States as case studies. The findings suggested that whistleblowing policies are effective in combating corruption in the public sector.

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This consists of summary of the findings, conclusions and, recommendations.

#### Summary

The study examines the relationship between whistle blowing and performance of public sector in Nigeria. The study analyzed whistle blowing in the dimension of internal whistle blowing mechanism, and external whistle blowing mechanism while performance was analyzed in the perspectives of real gross domestic product growth. This study adopted both ex post facto research design and survey research design. These research designs were selected because the researcher uses both primary and secondary data for this study. The population of this study was Federal Ministries and parastatal in Nigeria from 2021 - 2023. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and multivariate regression were statistical tools used to analyzed the relevant data with the aid of SPSS version 27.

#### Conclusion

The endemic and institutionalized corruption in Nigeria is bleeding the economy dry and this has frustrated economic development. Many at times, corruption exists in situations where there is little or no accountability and transparency environment at public offices. However, the introduction of whistleblowing is essential because it promotes accountability and good governance. Transparency International (2010), regarding the role of whistleblowing in fighting corruption, states: ...by helping to detect corruption cases, whistleblowers play a critical role in converting a vicious cycle of secrecy into a virtuous cycle. Detection of corruption is a pre-condition to initiate related investigations and prosecution. However, only if corruption cases are effectively prosecuted can a culture of corruption change (TI, 2010). Corruption cases are lost for a number of reasons such as lack of political will, inadequate funding of the anti-graft agency to enable it to carry out thorough investigations before prosecution and publication of information; the quality of lawyers working on the cases;



and the fact that many Nigerians still find it difficult to disclose information for fear of reprisals by the authorities involved. The whistleblower serves a vital function in government and business. When government agencies step over legal and ethical lines, whistleblowers can make these practices public knowledge, which can lead to violators being held accountable

Standing by the results and findings of this study, it is evidently clear that whistle blowing has the pedigree to mitigate corruption and invariably improve economic development in Nigeria. On the basis of the results from the tested formulated hypotheses, we concluded that:

- i. Internal whistle blowing mechanism significantly relates with real gross domestic product growth in Nigeria in the period of this study.
- ii. Internal whistle blowing mechanism significantly relates with real gross domestic product growth in Nigeria in the period of this study.

### 5.3 Recommendations

In line with the research findings, the study thus provided the following recommendations to further concretise whistle blowing for improvement of economic development in Nigeria.

- ✓ There should be adequate provision for the protection of whistle blowers in the constitution to encourage whistle blowers to blow the whistle.
- ✓ Whistle blowers should be rewarded adequately and protected from all forms of harm by keeping them anonymous and relocating them if the need arise.
- ✓ Anyone who is found guilty of corruption should return the money stolen and be persecuted in accordance to the law.
- ✓ Law enforcement agencies should be properly funded and provided with infrastructure that will help them carry out their duties effectively.
- ✓ There should be transparency and proper accountability of the money recovered from corrupt public officers.
- ✓ The money recovered from corrupt public office holders should be reinvested into the economy to develop the country.

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