# Corruption Reduction Model for Developing Economy; The Impact of Technology and Institutional Re-arrangement Nigeria as Case Study

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**Abstract:- Long acknowledged as a significant barrier to economic advancement and general development in many developing countries—Nigeria being a good example. (Aliyu & Elijah, 2011) (Njideka & Ezeibe, 2014). This study examines a holistic model approach that combines institutional reforms, legislative frameworks, public awareness campaigns, and technology-driven solutions, like e-government efforts and blockchain technology (Ogun, 2020; Robinson, 1998). In order to effectively address the problems of corruption, it emphasizes the necessity of persistent political will, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and international cooperation. This study advances the body of knowledge, informs evidence-based policy-making, and promotes innovation in the field of corruption reduction in emerging economies by providing concrete recommendations and directions for further research. All things considered, reducing corruption in developing economies such as Nigeria necessitates a comprehensive strategy that leverages technology and thoughtful institutional reforms. Stakeholders may contribute to the creation of a more fair and prosperous future for their population by tackling the underlying causes of corruption, enhancing the accountability and openness of government procedures, and empowering important institutions.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In many emerging economies, corruption is still a major problem that impedes economic growth and sustainable development (Robinson, 1998). Nigeria, a country endowed with abundant natural resources and enormous potential, has long struggled with corruption, which has impeded advancement in many areas. In order to combat corruption, a complete strategy that is adapted to the unique circumstances of the nation is needed. Based on the effective tactics used in other developing economies, this article suggests a comprehensive model for reducing corruption in Nigeria.

➢ *Background of Corruption in Developing Economies*

Colonial administrations frequently encouraged corruption through discriminatory policies and exploitative economic systems that benefited colonial elites. Robinson (1998) argues that corruption in developing economies has historical roots that can be traced back to colonialism and the exploitation of resources by colonial powers. Many developing economies inherited flimsy institutions and inadequate governance frameworks after gaining independence, which created an environment that was conducive to corruption. The issue was made worse by political unpredictability, a lax rule of law, and insufficient regulatory frameworks (Salifu, 2008). A renewed interest in examining the different forms of corruption in emerging nations has resulted from corruption's recent rise to prominence as a political and economic issue.

➢ *Understanding Nigerian Corruption*

Nigeria, a nation rich in natural riches and cultural variety, has long suffered from the widespread problem of corruption, which has damaged the political, social, and economic foundation of the country. Even in the sacred halls of academia, where the management of higher education institutions has fallen prey to the pernicious practices of bribery and nepotism, the tentacles of corruption have reached the highest echelons of power (Amini-Philips & Ogbuagwu, 2017).

In Nigeria, corruption can take many different forms, such as misappropriation of public funds, bribery, nepotism, and ineffective public service delivery and governance. Nigeria regularly scores poorly on the Corruption Perceptions Index, highlighting the severity of the problem. Poverty and inequality are made worse by corruption, which erodes public confidence in government institutions, skews resource distribution, and discourages foreign investment (Shehu, 2004).

Nigeria's complicated past, which is still evident in the country's colonial legacies, has greatly influenced the corruption environment . Weak governance frameworks, a culture of rent-seeking among the ruling class, and weak institutions are the legacy of colonial exploitation and resource extraction.

A culture of entitlement and resentment has been fostered by politicians using their positions of power to distribute resources and favors to their supporters, a winner-take-all political environment in Nigeria that has encouraged corruption (Makinde, 2013; Nmah, 2017; Shehu, 2004; Ijewereme, 2015). Corrupt practices have also been allowed to continue unchecked due to a lack of accountability and transparency in public institutions, as well as the politicization of law enforcement and the judiciary.

The problem has been made worse by economic inequality and pervasive poverty, as people turn to bribery and other illegal ways to get by. Furthermore, the enduring nature of corruption in Nigerian society can be attributed to the prevailing "get-rich-quick" mentality and the absence of societal shame around corrupt acts (Nmah, 2017).

A thorough, diversified strategy that addresses the underlying causes of corruption, fortifies institutional frameworks, and encourages accountability and openness is needed to handle this complex situation.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative approach to accomplish its findings. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the perceptions, obstacles, and strategies surrounding corruption reduction in Nigeria, the qualitative component will involve in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, anti-corruption agencies, civil society organizations, and subject matter experts (Harris, 2021).(Nenty, 2009) The methodology will involve the analysis of secondary data sources, such as government reports, international indices, and academic literature, in order to assess the prevalence and trends of corruption within the nation.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW ON CORRUPTION REDUCTION MODELS

The effectiveness of legal reforms, enforcement mechanisms, transparency and accountability initiatives, e-government and technological solutions, and institutional reforms have all been the subject of previous studies that have examined a variety of measures for eliminating corruption. In 2018, Fritzen and Dobel Strong legal frameworks combined with efficient enforcement are crucial for discouraging corrupt behavior and fostering accountability within government institutions, according to research on the effects of anti-corruption laws, judicial reforms, and law enforcement agencies on corruption outcomes (Fritzen & Dobel, 2018) (Recanatini, 2011)(Hope, 2017). To counteract corruption, the creation of independent anti-corruption organizations has also been considered; nevertheless, there has been conflicting evidence regarding the efficacy of these organizations.

Studies have also shown how initiatives promoting transparency and accountability, like laws protecting whistleblowers, citizen participation platforms, and freedom of information laws, can lessen the opportunity for corrupt practices and boost public confidence in institutions (Hope, 2017; Brody et al., 2020; Recantini, 2011; Vian, 2020; Cetchel et al., 2022).

According to recent studies, e-government and technological solutions can help combat corruption. Research indicates that by reducing human discretion and raising accountability, digital platforms, electronic procurement systems, and blockchain technology can improve transparency, expedite procedures, and lessen opportunities for corruption (Danish et al., 2018) (Halai et al., 2021) (Robinson, 1998).

Nonetheless, there are a variety of haphazardly organized points of view regarding the complicated relationship between e-government and corruption. Scholars have observed that e-government's ability to reduce corruption differs according to a nation's political, economic, and cultural circumstances (Addo, 2019; Khan et al., 2021; Ceschel et al., 2022).

Although these studies provide insightful information, more study is necessary to fully comprehend the interactions between different approaches to reducing corruption and how they are applied in varied institutional and legal situations.

A complicated and multidimensional problem, corruption threatens the credibility of institutions, erodes public confidence, and impedes social and economic advancement in communities all over the world. The misuse of authority for one's own benefit or the harm of others is referred to as "corruption" (Robinson, 1998), a phrase that encompasses a variety of illegal actions including fraud, nepotism, bribery, and embezzlement (Shihata, 1997).

Bribery is a widespread form of corruption that frequently arises in transactions between individuals and public authorities. It entails providing, giving, getting, or soliciting something of value in exchange for influence or action in one's favor (Robinson, 1998). Contrarily, embezzlement is the misappropriation of money or assets by those entrusted with their management or control; it usually involves the theft or diversion of public funds for one's own benefit or use (Vargas-Hernández, 2009; Robinson, 1998; Fayed, 2018). Favoritism and nepotism, which involve giving friends, family, or associates preference when it comes to employment, promotions, or resource distribution, threaten equal opportunity and meritocracy. Another common form of corruption is fraud, which includes a variety of dishonest practices intended to obtain financial or personal gain through deceit, misrepresentation, or manipulation (Vargas-Hernández, 2009). Lastly, extortion, which is the practice of threatening or coercing people or businesses in exchange for money, favors, or other benefits, frequently takes place in situations where public officials abuse their authority to demand bribes or protection payments.

➤ *Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Corruption*

A complex and multidimensional phenomenon, corruption has long been the focus of extensive scholarly investigation. A number of theoretical frameworks provide insights into the dynamics and underlying causes of corruption. The purpose of this research article is to examine the contributions that three well-known theoretical stances—*institutional theory*, *rent-seeking theory*, and *principal-agent theory*—have made to our understanding of corruption.

According to the *principal-agent* theory, corruption frequently results from a mismatch of incentives between agents (such as government officials or bureaucrats) and principals (such as people or taxpayers; Mascio & Piattoni, 2020) (Mushkat & Mushkat, 2012). Instead of serving the interests of the principals they are intended to represent, agents may abuse their position of authority to further their own agendas. According to this theory, businesses and institutions can reduce corruption by implementing incentive programs, accountability systems, and monitoring (Martinsson, 2021; Mushkat & Mushkat, 2012).

However, in situations when corruption is pervasive and the principals are vulnerable to corruption, the principal-agent concept may have limitations.

According to institutional theory, social and organizational behavior is governed by formal and informal rules, conventions, and practices, all of which can have an impact on corruption. Corruption thrives in contexts with weak institutional frameworks that are marked by low transparency, a lax rule of law, and insufficient enforcement tools. Reducing corruption and advancing good governance need strengthening institutions and encouraging institutional reforms (Vargas-Hernández, 2009). This perspective necessitates a more sophisticated understanding of corruption at the local level, beyond the nation-state level concentration, as mentioned in the literature.

According to the rent-seeking theory, corruption results from people or organizations trying to obtain benefits or economic rents through unproductive means like influence peddling, bribery, or lobbying. Corruption can cause inefficiencies in the distribution of resources, stifle competition, and distort market systems. Rent-seeking motivations must be addressed in order to combat corruption, and market competition must be encouraged. These actions have an impact on legislative and regulatory frameworks (Aidt, 2016).(Khwaja & Mian, 2011).

Although these theoretical frameworks provide insightful information, they can be enhanced by adding components from social capital theory, which contends that social networks, norms, and trust in society all have an impact on corruption. This multidisciplinary approach has the potential to offer a more thorough comprehension of the intricate and diverse aspects of corruption.

➢ *Models for Reducing Corruption*
Models for reducing corruption are crucial frameworks intended to lessen and end corrupt activities in a variety of fields, such as business, government, and civil society. In order to address the underlying causes of corruption and advance accountability, openness, and integrity, these models combine institutional, legal, cultural, and economic measures (Fritzen & Dobel, 2018).

Increasing the enforcement of anti-corruption laws and regulations is a crucial component of methods for reducing corruption. This entails making corrupt practices illegal, defining precise behavior expectations, and offering strong

enforcement and repercussions (Hope, 2017). Laws that improve openness in areas like financial transactions, asset reports, and public procurement can also have a big impact on reducing corruption. Laws protecting whistleblowers are also essential in enabling people to expose instances of wrongdoing without worrying about facing consequences.

Another essential element of models for reducing corruption is institutional reforms. Establishing independent, strong anti-corruption organizations with sufficient funding, power, and independence is essential for looking into and trying cases involving corruption. To stop, identify, and punish corrupt activities, law enforcement, the courts, and public administration must all strengthen their capacity and integrity.

Corrupt practices can be further reduced by enhancing accountability and transparency in public institutions through programs like performance evaluation systems, open data initiatives, and citizen involvement.

According to Hope (2017), economic incentives are also important in models of corruption reduction. Economic policies that lower the likelihood of rent-seeking behavior and improve market efficiency can assist lessen corruption. Another crucial tactic is the implementation of anti-corruption measures in public procurement procedures to increase competition, lower costs, and improve the quality of goods and services (Olken & Pande, 2012). Corrupt activities can also be discouraged by putting policies in place to make corruption more expensive through asset recovery, fines, and penalties for corrupt people and organizations.

Models for reducing corruption must include social and cultural interventions. A culture of anti-corruption and long-term behavioral changes can be facilitated by promoting ethical values and integrity and increasing public knowledge of the detrimental impacts of corruption on society (Ceschel et al., 2022).

➢ *The Role of Technology in Combatting Corruption.*
Digital payment systems, blockchain technology, open data efforts, and e-government platforms have become effective weapons in the battle against corruption. E-government platforms use technology to improve government services' accessibility, efficiency, and openness while lowering the possibility of corrupt behavior. Online portals for citizen services, public procurement, and information dissemination reduce the discretion of dishonest officials by streamlining administrative procedures (Danish et al., 2018). E-government platforms encourage accountability by digitizing interactions and transactions within the government and discourage bribery and rent-seeking.

Digital payment methods, such mobile money and electronic fund transfers, provide safe and transparent financial transaction processes, lowering the need for cash and lowering the possibility of corruption. Governments can improve accountability and traceability by reducing

financial leakage and diversion by digitizing payments for public services, salaries, and benefits (Bhattacherjee & Shrivastava, 2018). Digital payment systems also make it easier to monitor and audit financial transactions in real-time, which discourage corrupt behavior and increases fiscal transparency (Setor et al., 2021). (Halai and others, 2021).

Decentralized and unchangeable ledgers for transaction recording are made possible by blockchain technology, which improves integrity and transparency across a range of industries, including supply chain management, banking, and government. Through the creation of unchangeable transaction records, blockchain lowers the possibility of fraud, corruption, and data manipulation. Digital signatures and smart contracts allow automated agreement execution and verification, eliminating the need for middlemen and lowering the likelihood of corruption (Bhattacherjee & Shrivastava, 2018) (Halai et al., 2021) (Khan et al., 2021) (Sidorenko & Lykov, 2019).

Open data projects aim to increase accountability, openness, and public participation in government activity monitoring by making public government data and information available in machine-readable formats. Studies indicate that these digital anti-corruption instruments have demonstrated encouraging outcomes in different legal systems globally; however their application and influence may differ according on the situation. (Addo).

➤ *The Role of Institutional Arrangements in Combating Corruption*

Accountability is a critical component in discouraging corrupt practices, and independent oversight bodies, such as anti-corruption agencies and ombudsman offices, provide mechanisms for looking into claims of corruption and enforcing accountability measures. Institutional arrangements play a pivotal role in the fight against corruption by strengthening accountability, fostering transparency, enhancing the rule of law, and building capacity and expertise (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Transparency International, 2020). These arrangements increase public trust and the efficacy of anti-corruption efforts by fostering transparency in government operations. This allows citizens, civil society organizations, and the media to monitor government activities, scrutinize decision-making processes, and detect instances of corruption (Kassab & Rosen, 2019)(Khan et al., 2019)(Barafi et al., 2022).(Shah, 2007).

Another crucial component in the fight against corruption is the rule of law, and robust institutional frameworks guarantee the fair and uniform application of the law. In order to prosecute corrupt people, decide corruption cases, and impose sanctions—all of which contribute to the development of an environment that is supportive of good governance—an independent judiciary, strong legal institutions, and efficient law enforcement organizations are essential. (Chong et al., 2020)

Institutional frameworks also make it easier to create expertise and capacity in anti-corruption initiatives, which is essential for both the longevity of these initiatives and the successful application of anti-corruption methods.

But creating strong institutional frameworks to fight corruption might be especially difficult in unfavorable environments when official regulations are frequently flouted by the powerful and ineffectively enforced. Innovative and contextually appropriate ways are required in these kinds of situations to address certain issues that have a significant developmental impact and are doable to execute. In order to combat corruption in emerging nations, strategies that emphasize building institutions, creating and carrying out national anti-corruption policies, and encouraging political will and leadership can be successful. (Mascio & Piattoni, 2020) (Hope, 2017) (Chong et al., 2020) (Khan et al., 2019) (Brody et al., 2020).

## IV. DISCUSSION

Here is a thorough examination of institutional intervention and technology in Nigerian anti-corruption initiatives. It covers a range of perspectives, obstacles, and prospects for improving anti-corruption efforts.

➤ *The efficacy of Technological Interventions.*
Blockchain technology, e-government projects, and IT solutions are examples of technology-driven solutions that have the potential to greatly increase governance's accountability, efficiency, and transparency.

E-government projects lessen potential for corruption by facilitating citizen interaction, enhancing service delivery, and removing bureaucratic bottlenecks.

The use of blockchain technology can improve transparency in public service delivery, financial management, and procurement by providing tamper-proof record-keeping systems.

IT solutions give authorities the ability to take preventive action by enabling proactive monitoring, predictive analysis, and real-time insights on corruption risks and weaknesses.

➤ *Challenges in Implementing Technology Interventions:*
Technology interventions encounter obstacles like the digital divide, cyber security threats, and limits in technological infrastructure, despite their potential benefits.

The difference that exists between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not is known as the "digital divide." This barrier can worsen inequality and restrict the application of technology-driven solutions.

Risks associated with cyber security, such as identity theft, hacking, and data breaches, make it difficult to embrace and use technological solutions.

Limitations in technological infrastructure, like insufficient electricity and internet access, make it difficult to implement technology solutions successfully in distant and underprivileged locations.

➤ *Role of Institutional Interventions:*

In order to address the underlying causes of corruption and advance an integrity and accountability culture, institutional interventions such as law reforms, anti-corruption organizations, and institutional arrangements are crucial.

The legal framework required prosecuting corrupt activities, retrieving pilfered assets, and safeguard whistleblowers is provided by legal changes.

Investigating, prosecuting, and preventing corruption are vital tasks for anti-corruption authorities, but they are not without difficulties. These include political meddling, capacity issues, and coordination breakdowns.

For institutions to be more effective, responsive, and honest, institutional arrangements like organizational reform and capacity enhancement are essential.

➤ *Synergy between Technology and Institutional Interventions:*

In order to tackle corruption and achieve lasting results, a collaborative strategy that incorporates institutional and technological interventions is needed.

Technology interventions can improve governance processes' accountability, efficiency, and transparency in order to support institutional reforms.

The legal and regulatory framework required for the efficient implementation and use of technological solutions is provided by institutional actions.

To best utilize the synergies between technological and institutional reforms, government agencies, civil society organizations, and the commercial sector must collaborate and coordinate.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigerian corruption must be addressed with a multipronged strategy that incorporates institutional reforms and technology-driven remedies.

To facilitate the deployment of technology interventions, policy makers should give priority to investments in digital infrastructure, cyber security measures, and capacity building.

For anti-corruption authorities to effectively investigate and prosecute corruption cases, they require sufficient resources, political support, and independence.

To maximize the impact of institutional and technological initiatives in the fight against corruption and the advancement of good governance in Nigeria, stakeholders must better coordinate and collaborate with one another.

The conversation concludes by emphasizing how crucial it is for Nigeria's anti-corruption initiatives to incorporate institutional and technological solutions. Nigeria can significantly reduce corruption and promote sustainable development by tackling the obstacles and seizing the opportunities brought about by institutional reforms and technology.

➤ *Cross-Border and Transnational Corruption:*

International coordination and collaboration are necessary to address the complex issues posed by cross-border and transnational corruption. These difficulties and impediments highlight the complexity of Nigeria's efforts to reduce corruption and the need for comprehensive approaches that address the legal, institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic dimensions of corruption. Illicit financial flows, money laundering, and foreign bribery networks undermine national efforts to combat corruption and necessitate collaborative action at the regional and global levels (UNODC, 2017). For the nation to overcome these obstacles and make progress in the battle against corruption, further study and policy changes are required.

➤ *Policy Implications and Recommendations for Combating Corruption in Nigeria:*

• *Boosting Legal Structures:*

Enact extensive legislative reforms to improve the judicial system, enforcement of anti-corruption legislation, and laws themselves.

Make sure that corruption cases are prosecuted promptly and impartially, with an emphasis on recovering stolen property and high-level perpetrators.

To enable efficient execution of anti-corruption legislation, dedicated anti-corruption courts and whistleblower protection systems should be established.

• *Strengthening Anti-Corruption Organizations:*

Anti-corruption organizations like the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should be given sufficient funding, technical assistance, and operational autonomy.

To maximize efficiency and reduce effort duplication, anti-corruption organizations, law enforcement organizations, and other pertinent parties should coordinate and collaborate more closely.

• *Fostering Accountability and Transparency:*

By digitizing and automating government procedures, you may improve openness and honesty in the financial management, public procurement, and service delivery processes.

Increase accountability, transparency, and public participation in governance by putting open data programs and citizen engagement platforms into practice.

To guarantee accountability and stop corruption in public institutions, strengthen monitoring mechanisms like parliamentary committees and independent auditing organizations.

- *Promoting Public Knowledge and Involvement in Civil Society:*

Organize civic education initiatives and public awareness campaigns to educate people about the negative impacts of corruption and provide them the tools they need to hold public officials accountable.

Encourage and work in tandem with grassroots movements, media outlets, and civil society organizations to generate public support for anti-corruption campaigns and promote legislative changes.

Encourage citizen participation in monitoring and reporting corrupt activities, and ensure that whistleblowers and whistleblowing are protected through appropriate methods.

- *Increasing Global Collaboration:*

For the purpose of combating cross-border and transnational corruption, including illicit financial flows, money laundering, and foreign bribery, step up collaboration with regional organizations, international partners, and neighboring nations.

Adhere to worldwide best practices and standards for anti-corruption initiatives, and ratify and execute international anti-corruption treaties and accords, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

- *Institutionalizing Anti-Corruption Measures:*

Integrity training programs for public officials, performance management systems, and merit-based hiring practices can all help to institutionalize anti-corruption measures within public organizations.

Provide unambiguous guidelines for behavior, moral principles, and disciplinary actions to encourage honesty and responsibility in public employees, elected officials, and political appointees.

Encourage public institutions to have a culture of openness, honesty, and moral leadership, and demonstrate a strong commitment from the top down to fight corruption in all spheres of government.

- *Monitoring and Evaluation:*

Provide strong monitoring and evaluation systems to gauge the impact, effectiveness, and efficiency of anti-corruption initiatives and programs.

Review and adapt anti-corruption tactics on a regular basis in light of stakeholder feedback, lessons gained, and evidence-based conclusions.

To guarantee responsiveness and ongoing progress in anti-corruption initiatives, fortify public accountability, complaint resolution, and citizen feedback systems.

Collaboration amongst several stakeholders, institutional dedication, and a persistent political will are necessary for putting these policy ideas into practice. Nigeria can significantly reduce corruption, promote good governance, and create sustainable development by implementing a comprehensive approach that tackles the legal, institutional, socio-cultural, and international components of corruption.

- *Integration of Technology:*

Blockchain technology, IT solutions, and e-government programs are examples of technological integration that has the potential to improve governance processes' accountability, efficiency, and transparency.

- *Institutional Rearrangement:*

Systemic corruption concerns require institutional restructuring, which includes legal reforms, the strengthening of anti-corruption institutions, and the encouragement of integrity and transparency.

- *Challenges and Barriers:*

Nigeria's attempts to reduce corruption are hampered by issues like institutional deficiencies, political meddling, a deficient legal and judicial system, and sociocultural considerations.

- *Policy Implications and Recommendations:*

Stronger legal frameworks, more authority for anti-corruption organizations, increased accountability and transparency, increased public awareness and civil society involvement, improved international collaboration, institutionalization of anti-corruption measures, and the implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation systems are just a few of the policy recommendations.

Nigerian corruption must be addressed with a multipronged strategy that includes institutional reforms, public awareness campaigns, technology-driven solutions, and international collaboration. Achieving significant progress in reducing corruption and advancing good governance requires persistent political will, institutional commitment, and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

By addressing these conclusions and putting the suggested policies into practice, Nigeria may enhance governance outcomes, bolster its anti-corruption initiatives, and promote prosperity and sustainable development for all of its citizens.

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