




Significance of funding the Nigerian anti-corruption agencies: Lessons from Singapore and Hong Kong



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Background: The effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) depends on adequate funding. Literature has shown that successful ACAs all over the world are well funded, as well as as enjoyed political will of their home governments.

Aim: The article examined the funding of the Nigerian anti-corruption agencies in relation to anti-corruption agencies in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Settings: The article is structured into eight sections namely the introduction, methodology, conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, funding patterns of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, Singapore's and Hong Kong agencies' effectiveness in combating corruption, lessons from Singapore and Hong Kong as a basis for effective anti-corruption fighting in Nigeria and conclusion.

Methods: The article adopted the qualitative and quantitative methods. Data were collected from the primary and secondary sources. Two in-depth interview (IDI) sessions were held with officials of the agencies while documental analysis complemented the primary data in the study.

Result: The study found that Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies are not adequately funded; and recommends that a significant percentage of the national budget should be earmarked for the ACAs. And, the successive should show the political will and commitment to fund ACAs.

Conclusion: It is an actuality that funding of the two ACAs in Nigeria has not been backed by a strong political will. However, the potentiality of the ACAs is still in its infancy. So far their performance has been insignificant and ineffective in combating corruption in Nigeria.

Introduction

The detrimental effects of corruption on the economy of many countries in the past two decades could be seen in the global developmental landscape, and the rush to establish anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) had become a top policy priority around the world. This is based on the fact that governments see fighting corruption as a major policy for preventing their states from collapsing. Most observers agree that the global anti-corruption efforts have been appreciably successful, economically and socially, while some believe that the level of success in curbing corruption and preventing it from becoming lethargically endemic, has been below average (Brinkerhoff 2000; Doig & Riley 1998; Fjeldstad & Isaken 2008). It is important to note that, based on available statistics in most countries affected by endemic corruption, which led to the establishments of ACAs, corruption had remained endemic on a sustainable level.

In literature on anti-corruption, one of the identified factors that hindered some ACAs from fighting corruption effectively is underfunding. Although most countries of the world strive for qualitative ACAs with a real capacity to fight corruption, the problem of underfunding hinders this aspiration. At least, countries manage to balance between the worst and best case scenarios and the Nigerian ACAs are not isolated from this reality of a serious challenge.

Consequently, this paper explores the significance of increasing the funding of the two major ACAs (the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC] and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission [ICPC]) in Nigeria with a view to learning from countries where ACAs had largely been successful. This is significant because learning from these models, characterised by best practices, has a way of helping the major ACAs in Nigeria in combating corruption.

In exploring the consequence of increasing funds available to the agencies, the paper seeks answers to the following questions: What is the pattern or nature of funding allocated to these agencies in combating corruption? What models of funding and practice of anti-corruption are available from other countries? What lessons can be learnt from foreign anti-corruption agencies on the issue of funding? In proffering answers to these questions, the anti-corruption practices and experiences in Hong Kong and Singapore have become the models for consideration. Answers to these questions would presuppose systematic research that will not only X-ray the current situation, but also show and accentuate a good funding model obtained elsewhere. This part is thus the starting point in this research.

Quah's (2009) study concentrated on defying institutional failure regarding anti-corruption with examples from four Asian countries, while Mamba's (2013) study evaluated the anti-corruption initiatives of Botswana in relation to development. However, a comparative empirical analysis of the Nigerian ACAs vis-à-vis lessons from other countries has not been given the wider empirical study that it deserves. This paper, therefore, examines the significance of a well-funded anti-corruption agency concept in Nigeria by looking at the models and lessons from Singapore and Hong Kong.

The choice of these countries is informed by the successes recorded by their ACAs – Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) – in the fight against corruption in Hong Kong and Singapore, respectively. Therefore, lessons learnt can help the Nigerian ACAs which citizens perceive to be ineffective in combating corruption. Besides, the two countries did overcome endemic corruption and lessons from successful practices will help to improve and provide sustainable policy measures that can engender lasting solutions to the challenges bedevilling the anti-corruption struggle in Nigeria. This is the pre-occupation of this empirical conversation. The paper is structured into eight sections. The 'Introduction' section introduces the study; the 'Methodology' section presents the methodology of the study; the 'Conceptual clarification' section considers the conceptual clarification and the 'Theoretical framework' section elucidates the theoretical framework. In the 'Funding patterns of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria' section, the study examines the funding patterns of the EFCC and the ICPC in combating corruption. The section entitled 'Singapore's and Hong Kong's anti-corruption agencies' effectiveness in combating corruption' examines the lessons learnt from Hong Kong and Singapore, while the 'Conclusion' section concludes the study.

Methodology

Research design

This is comparative, mixed method research because of the combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. These were used to compare the funding of ACAs in

Nigeria with what was accomplished in the selected countries (Singapore and Hong Kong) of interest. Both primary and secondary sources of data were therefore sourced for the paper.

Methods of data collection and analysis

Two in-depth interview (IDI) sessions were conducted with purposively selected officials of the two agencies in Nigeria who were asked questions, such as: (1) How is your agency funded? (2) What can you say about your agency's funding from the federal government? (3) Did you have enough personnel in some key departments (prosecution and investigation departments)? The researchers relied on information in journals, textbooks, government publications and gazettes, and newspapers as secondary sources of data which were used to compliment the primary data sourced from the interviewees. Quantitative data were retrieved from the annual reports of the agencies and federal government's appropriation act for some years, and IDIs, conducted with the officials of the agencies, were recorded, transcribed and subjected to ethnographic summaries and quotations, while secondary data obtained were content-analysed.

Conceptual clarification

Anti-corruption agencies

Anti-corruption agencies are institutions established by the government or an organisation to combat corruption. Aderounmu (2011) conceives ACAs beyond their role of combating corruption by seeing them as the measures, initiatives and programmes put in place to create a corruption-free society and maintain a high moral standard. Maintenance of a high moral standard is essential for every society willing to be free from immoral or corrupt acts. The context of ACAs in this paper, however, refers to a reform designed by the Nigerian government in combating corruption.

Funding

Funding is an essential component and tool needed by all government agencies and parastatals because it determines their efficiency. It is a source of supply, a stock, a fund of goodwill or a sum of money or other resources set aside for sustainability of their mandate; operations and for other a specific purpose. In a broader sense, funding is an act of providing financial resources, usually in the form of money or other values such as effort or time, to finance a need, programme or project, usually by an organisation or government (Wikipedia 2017). Similarly, *Financial Times Lexicon* (2017) conceives funding as the money sourced for a particular purpose. Although it has a similar meaning as financing, the terms are somehow different because the latter is more of a loan. For the purpose of this paper, the definition provided by Wikipedia (2017) will suffice.

Corruption

According to Dey (1989:504), 'corruption is any act undertaken within the deliberate intent of deriving or extracting monetary

or other benefits by encouraging or conniving at illegal activities'. In the words of Odekunle (1991):

Corruption is simply a species of more inclusive class, that is, criminally or socially, conduct or behaviour, coded or uncoded ... perpetrated primarily for economic gain, and it involves the use and misuse of legitimate forms of commerce, industry, trade-governmental or corporate service and administration as well as some form of organization in the sense of a set or system of more or less formal; relationships between persons perpetrating the corrupt acts. (p. 13)

Comprehensively, Osoba (1998) defines corruption as a form of anti-social behaviour by an individual and social group which confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators, is inconsistent with the established legal norms and prevailing moral ethos of the land and is likely to subvert or diminish the capacity of the legitimate authorities to provide fully for the material and spiritual well-being of all members of society in a just and equitable manner. In the context of this study, corruption is taken to mean the definition adopted by Osoba.

Theoretical framework

The paper is anchored to the systems theory which is an analysis of political life as popularised by David Easton. The central argument of the systems theory, which is also referred to as the Eastonian model, is that the state is a political system (Easton 1957), a network of interrelated, self-maintaining and self-regulating components. Broadly speaking, every system is composed of the input, processor, output and feedback. The Eastonian model describes the functioning of a political system using three boxes with connecting arrows from the left to the right and with a feedback loop. The political process is initiated from the left box, which is used to depict the input represented by the totality of demands from the political environment. These demands represent the aspirations of the citizens and they move into the second box which is also referred to as the 'Processor' or the 'Black Box' for sorting and processing. The processed demands come out in the third box as output, and this output are government's decisions as represented by its policies and programmes. The output is in the form of a feedback loop which serves as a gauge of people's feelings about the government's actions Figure 1.

Anti-corruption agencies play a crucial roles in preventing and fighting corruption and educating people. They must provide the basis for ensuring that the state and its people are free from corruption and the role has been played by the ACAs against the looters and those involved in corruption in Nigeria. Based on the foregoing realities, it is germane to assert that the government should provide enough funding and support to the agencies, but the government, for its part, does not have the required funds to meet some of its obligations. The Nigerian anti-corruption system is, however,

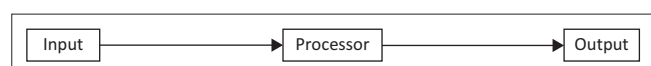


FIGURE 1: A simple system.

facing a serious challenge regarding funding which has a capacity to compromise the extent and effectiveness of anti-corruption struggles. For instance, in 2014, the EFCC cried out that it was being starved of funding and this forced the agency to be chasing weak criminals and 419 (fraud) cases (Akinsola 2014). The systems theory is significant to this study because the ACAs in Nigeria operate within a network of other government agencies and parastatals with the mandate of delivering on the promises of government. Whatever is provided as input into the anti-corruption mechanism by the government is capable of reproducing itself. Therefore, if the funding is appropriate, there is a greater possibility of effectiveness with adequate supervision and the right policies.

Funding patterns of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria

The effectiveness of ACAs revolves around proper funding and proper funding requires adequate personnel, especially in key areas: resources needed to prosecute and investigate corruption cases, and campaign to educate and enlighten the people regarding the effect of corruption. The ICPC and the EFCC are funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria and some international donors. The funding of the ACAs is shown in a comparative analysis in table 1.

Table 1 reveals that the EFCC was allocated more by the federal government than the ICPC through public subventions, within the stated study period. As a matter of fact, available data show that it was only in 2003 that the ICPC was allocated more than the EFCC. The reason was that the EFCC was just set up then and it had limited structures on the ground; subsequently, the EFCC was allocated more than the ICPC. The analysis further reveals that both agencies were poorly funded, though the EFCC was allocated more and was better funded (an average of ₦6.35 billion per annum) than the ICPC (an average of ₦2.662 billion per annum). It further reveals a reduction in funding to the EFCC and the ICPC. For instance, in 2011, the EFCC was allocated ₦13.8 billion, but it was reduced in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

TABLE 1: A comparative analysis of the allocations to the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission from 2003 to 2015.

Year	ICPC	EFCC
2003	₦412.8 million	₦100 million
2004	₦459.2 million	₦1.17 billion
2005	₦818.5 million	₦1.8 billion
2006	₦1.06 billion	₦2.1 billion
2007	₦1.9 billion	₦3 billion
2008	₦3.59 billion	₦ 3.71 billion
2009	₦2.29 billion	₦6.28 billion
2010	₦2.34 billion	₦7.68 billion
2011	₦3.88 billion	₦13.8 billion
2012	₦3.97 billion	₦10.6 billion
2013	₦4.41 billion	₦10.22 billion
2014	₦4.68 billion	₦10.25 billion
2015	₦4.61 billion	₦10.47 billion

ICPC, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission; EFCC, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

TABLE 2: The economic and financial crimes commission and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission and their percentages of the total amount budgeted.

Year	Total budget allocation (₦)	EFCC allocation (₦)	%	ICPC allocation	%
2009	3 101 813 750 625	6 283 499 239	0.2	2 288 971 594	0.1
2010	4 427 184 595 534	7 681 976 779	0.2	2 325 564 386	0.1
2011	4 226 191 559 254	13 854 669 470	0.3	3 878 472 373	0.1
2012	4 877 209 156 933	10 607 150 473	0.2	3 968 340 697	0.1
2013	4 987 220 425 601	10 219 777 967	0.2	4 405 276 495	0.1
2014	4 642 960 000 000	10 245 369 170	0.2	4 675 887 517	0.1
2015	4 493 363 957 158	10 472 982 781	0.2	4 610 936 843	0.1

EFCC, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission; ICPC, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission.

Also, that for the ICPC was reduced in 2015 from ₦4.68 billion to ₦4.61 billion, although the ICPC saw marginal increases in its allocation between 2011 and 2014. In Table 2, the budgets of the ACAs, alongside the percentages of the total national budgets between 2009 and 2015, are shown.

From the above table, the allocation to the ICPC from 2009 to 2015 showed a recurring 0.1% of the total budget, while that of the EFCC was 0.2%. It was only in 2011 that the allocation to the EFCC was increased by 0.1% (0.3%). The trend indicates that the Federal Government of Nigeria has not demonstrated any sincere commitment to the fight against corruption if funding is used as a yardstick. The implication of this is that corruption may continue to thrive if adequate funding of ACAs is not guaranteed. According to Owasanoye (2014:11), the inability, ineffectiveness, inefficiency and, of course, the delay in bringing to justice high profile personalities alleged of criminal misappropriation, money laundering and other forms of fraud are directly linked to the underfunding of the ACAs. Looking at the level of funding for these agencies and their inability to prosecute high profile persons, he posits that:

It appears that the high profile defendants have more money at their disposal than the prosecuting agencies. In reality, the accused would appear to spend more money on the trial than the state considering the calibre of legal counsel retained by them. Most of the defence counsels are Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN) who are generally believed to be very expensive to retain. (Owasanoye 2014:11)

While briefing the Senate Committee on Drugs, Narcotics, Financial Crimes and Anti-corruption, the EFCC's representative buttressed the point of underfunding when he declared that:

The Commission had less than ₦2 million in its account. I could recollect when the committee paid us an oversight visit and I did make our financial position known to the committee. As at now, EFCC does not have ₦2 million in its account. We don't have money ... we have been complaining that no money has been released for us for operations ... if we can afford to pay salary, that is all. That is the position under which we operate. (*Nigerian Tribune*, 17 December 2013)

This same underfunding is a major theme emphasised by officials of the two agencies during the interview. The EFCC official observed that:

Most of the funding we get from the federal government is mainly used to pay salaries of our workers. Little is being spent on other areas. This has been affecting our performance in the fight against corruption in Nigeria (*Nigerian Tribute*, December 17, 2003).

The ICPC Planning, Research and Review (PRR) head also said:

Given the analysis of the allocations from the federal government, these are not sufficient to really fight corruption. If you are to talk of corruption, fighting it is expensive. Besides, Nigeria is a country where we have a large number of people. In other words, Nigeria has a large population and if someone commits an offence of corruption right now, in a few minutes so many people will commit similar offences. That is why I am saying we need much money to carry out our mandates. We spend our allocation on salaries and overheads of public servants while what we have left for items that would assist the agency to meet its mandate are inadequate.

The implication of this is that the tasks of preventing, investigating and prosecuting offenders will be difficult, given the current regression of public funding for these agencies. To show that funding is very important to every successful anti-corruption drive, the study X-rays the successful models of anti-corruption in Singapore and Hong Kong with a view to highlighting the need for adequate funding for the ACAs in Nigeria. The paper will at this stage consider lessons from Hong Kong and Singapore in combating corruption in Nigeria.

Singapore's and Hong Kong's anti-corruption agencies' effectiveness in combating corruption

Before the advent of the ICAC, 'corruption was a serious problem in Hong Kong especially during the colonial period' (Quah 2007). According to Pelmier (1985), corruption was a way of life in Hong Kong because:

The Chinese who formed its population had long been accustomed to a system where most of an official's income depended on what he was able to extort from the public. Not surprisingly, during the first decade of the colony's history, corruption propelled at all levels of government. (p. 123)

Therefore, the ICAC was established on 15 February 1974 with the Independent Commission Against Corruption Ordinance (ICACO). The Commission is autonomous of the civil service and the Commissioner is answerable directly to the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong's Special Administrative Region. The ICAC is committed to fighting corruption through a three-pronged strategy of effective law enforcement, education and prevention, to maintain Hong Kong as a fair and just society (*Hong Kong Facts* 2016).

The ICAC has been enjoying resounding success in the fight against corruption since 1974. Although it enjoyed marginal success when it was first established, domestic constituents marked its efforts and its signals backed its credibility. However, the reparation and successful prosecution of Peter Godbee increased the ICAC's credibility. Since then, the ICAC had built an impressive record of investigations that had resulted in numerous convictions. Nowadays, Hong Kong ranks as one of the least corrupt jurisdictions in East Asia, and this reputation is free-wheeling the market economy (Heilbrunn 2004).

The success of the ICAC was attributed to solid budgetary support and stringent laws put in place by the Hong Kong government. For instance, in 2001, the ICAC was appropriated the equivalent of US\$90 million, an amount viewed as fully justified when compared with the costs of unchecked corruption (Chan 2002). The allocation to the agency was for the payment of the salaries of approximately 1200 officers who worked on a contractual basis at the ICAC. These officers were independent of the civil service and worked on the basis of mutual consent (Heilbrunn 2004).

Besides, three-fourth of the ICAC's budget is allocated to the Operational Department and many talented officials gravitate to that department. The Corruption Prevention Department funds studies on corruption, conducts seminars for business leaders and helps public and private organisations to identify strategies for reducing corruption. The Department has funded thousands of studies for public sector agencies and businesses in Hong Kong (De Speville 1997).

A close examination of the allocation to the ICAC shows that the agency has enjoyed considerable funding from the Hong Kong government because since 1974 the funds allocated to the agency has been increasing. Table 3 corroborates this.

Table 3 reveals that the ICAC's budget increased by 15 times from HK\$12.9 million in 1974 to HK\$193 million in 1987. However, in 2001, the ICAC's budget further increased to HK\$686.7 million. It was reduced to HK\$663 million in 2005, and increased marginally to HK\$668.5 million in 2006 (Quah 2007:11). Although there was a reduction in the allocation from 2001 to 2005 (HK\$686.7 million to HK\$663 million), the budget still covered the structural and operational units of the agency. Besides, the agency is still effective in fighting corruption in Hong Kong.

The experience of the CPIB in Singapore is also essential because it constitutes an investigative model worthy of

TABLE 3: Hong Kong's allocation to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (1974–2006).

Year	Budget
1974	HK\$12.9 million
1987	HK\$193 million
2001	HK\$686.7 million
2005	HK\$663 million
2006	HK\$668.5 million

Source: Quah (2009:11); ICAC (1989)

TABLE 4: Budget allocated to corrupt practices investigation bureau by Singapore's government (1978–2005).

Year	Budget allocated
1978	\$1 024 370
1982	\$2 256 900
1987	\$4 147 230
1989	\$5 094 613
1993	\$6 525 834
1995	\$8 087 308
1997	\$10 225 463
2002	\$15 357 665
2003	\$19 788 317
2004	\$13 447 079
2005	\$12 726 405
2006	\$12 856 565

Source: Quah 2009:8; Republic of Singapore 2006

emulation by governments around the world. The CPIB was established to respond to corruption in Singapore which also experienced endemic corruption during the colonial period like in Hong Kong. It was when police inspectors stole 1800 tons of narcotics in the 1950s that the government saw the necessity to establish the CPIB which was meant to prevent corruption (Leak 1996). The CPIB, like the ICAC, has been successes in combating corruption in Singapore. In the words of Kim, Fong and Findlay (1993):

... evidence of the CPIB's success in reducing corruption is present from Singapore's highly favourable investment climate that typically ranks among the top twenty recipients of foreign investment in the world in absolute terms. (p. 127)

Funding of the CPIB is also encouraged by the Singaporean government because solid funding, coupled with the political will, has helped the agency to establish its effectiveness in combating corruption. Table 4 reveals the budgetary allocation to the CPIB from 1978 to 2005.

From the table above, the CPIB's budget grew by 19 times from \$1 024 370 in 1978 to \$19 788 317 in 2003. The table also shows that the CPIB's budget increased gradually from \$1 024 370 in 1978 to \$2 256 900 in 1982, to \$4 147 230 in 1987, and to \$5 094 613 in 1989 (Quah 2007). Despite the fact that there were reductions in the allocation in 2004 and 2005, the agency was still effective in combating corruption in Singapore because it was able to cope with the structures on ground.

A close examination of the tables indicates that the Hong Kong's ICAC and Singapore's CPIB are well-funded and they have adequate staff for performing their functions effectively. Adequate funding and adequate personnel have helped these agencies to be models to other countries across the world in combating corruption across the world.

Lessons from Singapore and Hong Kong as basis for effective anti-corruption fight in Nigeria

Having examined the effectiveness of Singapore's and Hong Kong's ACAs in combating corruption, it is essential to

state some lessons to be learnt from these models by the Nigerian government.

First, the governments of Singapore and Hong Kong show their readiness in combating corruption and their actions were in line with global best practices on successful ACA. According to Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA 2016):

... the global best practices suggest that partnerships supported by the coercive powers of government and its agencies often can lead to better results or lead to changes in reducing corruption (p. 157)

In Singapore, the campaign against corruption is a continuous one and it is led by the political leaders themselves. Also, in Hong Kong, the government demonstrates its political will to fight corruption; it was through the political will that the CIPB's and ICAC's budgets were increased, and the agencies were well-funded and well-staffed. Therefore, the Nigerian government should also show its readiness to fight corruption; in other words, Nigerian leaders should learn from these countries and must also commit to fighting corruption through the demonstration of a strong political will.

The low level of political will of successive governments is manifested in Table 2, looking at the total national budget vis-à-vis the allocation to these agencies that combat corruption in Nigeria. In 2005 alone, the CPIB in Singapore and the ICAC in Hong Kong received budgets of US\$7.7 million and US\$85 million, respectively, relative to Nigeria's major ACAs (ICPC and EFCC) with the allocation of US\$ 6.15 million and US\$ 13.5 million, respectively. In 2015, the budgetary allocation to the ICPC and the EFCC was increased to \$23.5 million and \$53.55 million, respectively. The budgets were still inadequate if the structures of the agencies and the population of Nigeria are considered. Nigeria had a projected population of over 138 million in 2005, while Hong Kong and Singapore had populations of 7 million and 4.3 million, respectively. The trend in Nigeria's population is more than the total population of Singapore and Hong Kong, yet these countries' budgetary allocation to their ACAs is more than that of Nigeria. This implies that the Nigerian situation is pathetic because a look at the national population and the budget allocated to the ACAs shows a serious underfunding.

Second, as the fight against corruption is expensive, the Nigerian government must increase the funds allocated to the ACAs. The current recurring allocation of 0.1% and 0.2% to the ICPC and the EFCC are not sufficient for the fight against corruption. As observed, the ICAC's and CIPB's financing increased; and even when the money was reduced, they were still well-funded enough to not only pay the salaries of the workers, but also to cater for the institutional structures of the agencies. In other words, the structures needed in combating corruption in these countries are adequate and this adequacy has helped the ACAs to be efficient and effective in combating corruption in the two countries. The current trend in allocations to Nigeria's ACAs shows that the funds can only be used to pay salaries

of workers. Besides, Nigeria's ACAs have bloated administrations compared to specialist investigators and prosecutors which constitute the line positions of the ACAs in Nigeria. It has been difficult to recruit professionals or specialists in combating corruption in Nigeria because the agencies are underfunded.

Third, in Singapore, the ICAC staff are paid higher salaries than other government officials and they are not affected by civil service administration. This is not obtainable in Nigeria. Politicians and some career officers receive higher salaries than the staff of the ICPC and the EFCC. When the officials of ACAs are well paid, they would not be susceptible to the influence and bribes of people who wield power in the state. Besides, it will make the officials work harder. This is another lesson the Nigerian government should learn from Singapore and Hong Kong.

Fourth, it has been observed by De Speville (1997) that three-fourth of the ICAC's budget was allocated to the operational department. This implies that 75% of the ICAC's budget is used for operational skill which helps in strengthening the agency and ensuring its effectiveness. This further depicts that one-fourth of the budgets is used to pay salaries and the remaining goes for special departments such as prosecution and investigation. These departments are where the specialists are and they need to be well-funded if ever the anti-corruption fight will be effective. The budgets of the ACAs in Nigeria should be increased to cater for their operational skills because this has a significant impact on their ability to secure convictions.

Fifth, the staff-population ratio in the two countries is fairly balanced in terms of fighting corruption relative to Nigeria's ACAs. For instance, in 2005, Singapore and Hong Kong had total populations of 4.3 million and 7 million, respectively, while their anti-corruption personnel were 81 and 1194, respectively. The staff-population ratios in two countries were 1:53 086 and 1:5663, respectively (Quah 2009). Nigeria relative to her population of 138 939 500 (FGN, Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, various years) and ACAs' personnel of 1071, leaving the staff-population ratio at 1:129 728 in 2005 (Awopeju, undated). Although it was reduced in 2015 to 1:69 685 with a projected total population of 181 181 700 and 2600 personnel to fight corruption, yet these ratios are extremely unbalanced. With the level of population and the current staff-population ratio, the war against corruption will be an up-hill task in Nigeria. Therefore, the Nigerian government needs to significantly balance its population relative to the personnel recruited to combat corruption.

Sixth, as Singapore's and Hong Kong's governments have funded the CPIB and ICAC well, the Nigerian government should do likewise. These ACAs need to establish zonal offices in the 36 states of the federation, so that the fight against corruption will receive a boost at the state as well as local government levels. Currently, the EFCC has its headquarters in Abuja and two zonal offices, while the ICPC

also has its headquarters in Abuja and 14 zonal offices. Their offices are inadequate considering the numerous Nigerian population. The establishment of zonal offices will boost the fight against corruption.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the article is twofold – the actuality and the potentiality. It is an actuality that the funding of the two ACAs in Nigeria has not been backed with a strong political will. However, the potentiality of the EFCC and the ICPC is still at infancy and they have demonstrated an ineffective and insignificant performance in combating corruption in Nigeria.

The actuality–potentiality levels of the ACAs have been established by the paper that their budgetary allocation is still very low with significant impact on efforts at combating corruption in Nigeria. It has affected their operational skills. Also, the paper has argued that their weak financial base has a correlation with the political will which explains the seeming failure of the major ACAs in combating corruption. Therefore, the stronger the political will, the more generous the funds available to the agencies. The ICAC and CPIB are examples and successful models of anti-corruption to the whole world. Therefore, if the Nigerian government can increase the budgetary allocations to these agencies, the war against corruption will be boosted and better results achieved than the present will be recorded.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that there is no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced the writing of this article.

Authors' contributions

A.A was the project leader. A.A. was responsible for writing the introduction, methodology, lessons from other countries and conclusion. S.O. was responsible for the theoretical framework and conceptual clarification. I.J. was responsible for analysis of gross domestic product (GDP) to be set aside for combating corruption and wrote recommendations for the study.

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