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**IMPLICATIONS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF TAX PRACTITIONERS, FORENSIC
ACCOUNTANTS AND ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION AT CURBING
CORRUPTION IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study sought to know the implications of the activities of Tax Practitioners, Forensic Accountants and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission at curbing corruption in Osun State Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the level of awareness of the use of Forensic Accountants for fraud detection and prevention among professional Accountants in Osun State, Nigeria; to evaluate the extent to which the activities of Forensic Accountants, Tax Practitioners and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission help in curbing corruption in Osun State, Nigeria. Survey design was adopted through the use of questionnaire for the study. The population of this study consisted of two hundred (200) members of staff (management, senior and junior) of the Office of the Accountant General, Osun State Ministry of Finance, Osun State Internal Revenue Service and other Agencies in Osun State from which a sample of one hundred and thirty-three (133) members of staff was selected using Yaro-Yamane sampling technique. One hundred and thirty-three (133) copies of questionnaire were administered out of which one hundred and twenty-five (125) copies were returned. Data were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between the activities of Forensic Accountants and activities of Tax Practitioners at curbing corruption in Osun State. It was also found out that proper financial management would also help to reduce crime rate in Osun State, Nigeria. The study concluded that Accountants' skills and Tax practitioners' activities have significant effect on uncovering and reducing frauds in Osun State, Nigeria. Finally, the study recommended that Nigerian Universities should introduce Forensic Accounting courses to increase the quality of Accounting graduates from the Universities, among others.

Key Words: Tax Practitioners, Forensic Accountants, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Fraud, Corruption, Osun State, Nigeria.

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Introduction

Corruption is considered the bane of the Nigerian society which has dogged the country and plagued all attempts to improve the lives of the citizens. Although, corruption is not only predominant in Nigeria, the prevalence and the amount involved arouses interest and calls for attention, Nwachukwu, (as cited in Ibidunni, Ibidunni, Okere and Aro, 2018). According to the 2017 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of the Transparency International (TI), Nigeria is the 32nd most corrupt country in the world. Nigeria occupies the 148th position out of 180 countries ranked by the index (Transparency International, 2017). The Corruption Perception Index ranks countries on a scale from 0 (perceived to be highly corrupt) to 100 (perceived to be very clean). Unfortunately, out of the 180 countries ranked, more than 2/3 including Nigeria scored below 50% and according to the Transparency International (TI), any country that scores below 50% on the index is considered “highly corrupt” Nigeria scored 27% which depicts that the country is “highly corrupt”. A greater percentage of corruption in the public sector happens within the Nigerian civil service.

The widespread corruption in modern organisations has made traditional auditing and investigation inefficient and ineffective in the detection and prevention of the various types of corruptions confronting businesses world-wide. Fraud is a universal problem as no nations is resistant, although developing countries and their various states suffer the most pain. The increasing sophistication of financial fraud requires that forensic accounting be added to the tools necessary to bring about the successful investigation and prosecution of those individuals involved in criminal activities. The Nigerian banking sector is one of the most controlled and regulated sectors. In spite of this, financial crimes such as embezzlement, bribery, bankruptcy, security fraud, among others, have taken the centre stage in the scheme of things in the sector according to Adeniyi, as cited in Oseni, (2017).

The consequences and the effects of financial crimes in corporate organizations are very grave and it is against this background that forensic accounting emerged. It is a response to the growing sophistication and awareness of financial crimes. Maintain that the increasing wave of fraud is causing a lot of havoc in Nigeria. This is because fraud has eaten deep into every aspect of the Nigerian society to the extent that many organizations have lost confidence of their customers. Key agencies like Independence Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) were established to fight corruption. All these could not work effectively because of various challenges like politicization and blackmail, constitutional immunity as stated in section 308 of Nigerian constitution, public apathy and doubtful attitudes towards anti-corruption work, and slow justice. Forensic Accounting encompasses three major areas of investigation, dispute resolution and litigation support. In the light of the problem of financial crimes discussed above, this study aims at examining the problems and prospects of forensic accounting and financial fraud in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

There has been continuous increase in financial crimes, mismanagement and misappropriation of public funds in the Nigerian polity. The primacy of the Buhari- led administration is the fight against corruption. Many arrests have been made; however, the number of prosecution cannot be viewed in the same manner. This can be attributed to lack of application of Forensic Accounting skills in the investigation process and the awareness of the

use and application of Forensic Accounting in litigation process is limited. It is because of this that this study intends to answer the following questions:

- (a) What is the place of Forensic Accounting in curbing corruption, fraud detection and prevention in Nigeria?
- (b) How much awareness has been created on the use of Forensic Accounting in fraud detection?

Also, the limited resources at the disposal of the government vis-à-vis the glaring lapses in the nation's socio-infrastructure status against the backdrop of overridden level of fraudulent/corrupt practices in the public sector has become a thing of worry to both government and the citizens now than before, particularly in view of the teething effect of the recent global economic downturn on world economies (Nigeria inclusive) and other present harsh economic climate confronting Nigerian economy like Naira devaluation, fall in oil revenue, etc; prudent management of available public resources thus becomes inevitable if the economy must survive.

Nevertheless, fraudulent and corrupt practices have long been features of Nigeria's economic and political landscape; systemic corruption which engenders low levels of transparency and accountability by public officers has been identified as the major source of development failure (National Planning Commission, 2005 in Nna and Jacob, cited by Amaefule and Umeaka, 2016).

The effects and implications of this ugly scenario in Nigeria's social, political and economic development are myriad. Achebe (1983) in Chukwuemeka, *et al* (2012) observed that generally, as much as sixty percent of the wealth of Nigeria is regularly consumed by corruption. The Transparency International specifically reported that over 500 billion dollars has been removed from the coffers of the Nigerian government through corruption between 1960 and 2009. Corruption in Nigeria constitutes a serious barrier to effective resource mobilization and allocation as it diverts resources away from activities that are vital to poverty eradication and economic and sustainable development.

This has warranted a significant reduction in the quality and quantity of goods and services available to the public as evidenced by poor infrastructures, poor quality of education standards, poor health facilities and high cost of living and rising social insecurity. According to Osioma, (as cited in Joseph, Okike and Yoko, 2016) fraud has stultified growth and national development, subverted the nation's values and norms, and generated a culture of illegality and impunity in public service thus fraud has become one of the greatest threats to the world economy. Fagbadebo, (as cited in Joseph, Okike and Yoko, 2016) believed that the evil which corruption portends are many: it stunts growth and development, creates political instability, destroys the social economic life of the nation, undermines the legitimacy of the state, makes fiscal planning almost impossible, places the wealth of the nation in the wrong hands and leads to an uneven distribution of the amenities and perquisites of life. Premised on the above, one can be sure that huge funds that would have warranted massive developmental boom and outstanding economic growth if properly utilized have hitherto gone into the hands of fraudsters in the disguise of government officials; the consequence of this on our nations economy cannot altogether be wished away.

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Objectives of the Paper

The main objective of this paper is to examine implications of the activities of Tax Practitioners, Forensic Accountants and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission at curbing corruption in Osun State Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. ascertain the level of awareness of the use of Forensic Accounting for fraud detection and prevention among professional Accountants in Nigeria;
- ii. examine the extent to which Economic and Financial Crimes Commission at curbing corruption in Osun State, Nigeria;
- iii. assess the application of expert witness in litigation in financial crimes on the diversion of unutilized allocated funds in Osun State, Nigeria, and
- iv. as well as evaluate the extent to which Forensic Accountants and Tax Practitioners', Economic and Financial Crimes' activities coming to curb corruption in Osun State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Fraud and Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption, fraud and other financial and economic crimes have made it difficult for Nigerians to meet the welfare of the citizens. These evils have assumed alarming proportions and pervasive mismanagement of resources have become the order of the day in public sector. According to Okolo (as cited in Amake and Ikhatua, 2016) that financial crime has become really pervasive and the likelihood of corporate fraud occurring has also become more severe. High level of financial abuse was hindering tax collection, making and enforcement of Law difficult and discourages foreign investment. The wide spread of fraud in public sector have made traditional auditing and investigation inefficient and ineffective in detecting fraud. Fraud is a subject that has received a lot of attention both globally and in Nigeria.

According to Karwai (2002), he maintains that the increase wave of fraud is causing a lot of havoc in the Nigeria public sector. This is because fraud has penetrated into every aspect of Nigeria public sector. Okunbor & Obaretin (2010) reported that the spates of corporate failure have placed greater responsibilities and functions on Accountant to equip themselves with skills to identify and act upon indicators of poor corporate governance, mismanagement, frauds and wrong doings. The failure of auditor to prevent, detect and reduce modern frauds like white collar crimes such as security fraud, embezzlement, bankruptcies, contract disparate, money laundering and other financial crime in the public sector has put pressure on Professional Accountant and Legal Practitioners to find better ways of exposing fraud in public sector. It has now become pertinent to introduce and practice Forensic Accounting which is one of the approaches that can be used for the prevention and detection in public sector since external auditor do not or may not have the required knowledge to be able to detect, prevent or reduce fraud in Nigeria's public sector.

Williams, Khan (as cited in Romanus, 2014) defined corrupt practice as any immoral, illegal and unethical act and include to cheat, lie, defraud and so on. Corruption is also seen as the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit. Forms of corruption include bribes, cronyism and nepotism, political donations, kickbacks and artificial pricing and fraud of all kinds. Fraud also has been classified into three to include asset misappropriation, corruption and fraudulent

statements. They involve theft or misuse of asset, improper use of influence in a transaction for own benefit and falsification of financial statements Rumaswany (as cited in Romanus, 2014).

The following are the types of fraud that can easily be perpetrated in companies and ministries. Credit card fraud, consumer fraud, kickbacks, bid rigging, inflated invoices, inventory theft, theft of cash, cheque fraud, ghost employees, computer related fraud, financial statement fraud, cyber theft, hacking into unauthorised source of information, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) theft, asset revenue misstatement, concealed liabilities and expenses, improper revenue recognition, inadequate disclosures, inside trading, diversion of sales, false invoices and phantom vendors, loan fraud, theft of intellectual property, payroll fraud and so on. The forensic accountant's knowledge and understanding of abnormal situations and manner of treating transactions will assist him to identify frauds easily.

Concept of Forensic Accounting

The term Forensic means suitable for use in a court of law, and it is to that standard and potential outcome that Forensic Accountants generally have to work. Litigation services and investigative accounting are the two main branches of Forensic Accounting, according to some experts. Forensic accounting is a discipline that has its own models and methodologies of investigative procedures that search for assurance, attestation and advisory perspective to produce legal evidence. It is concerned with the evidentiary nature of accounting data, and as a practical field concerned with Accounting Fraud and Forensic Auditing; compliance, due diligence; detection of financial misrepresentation and financial statement fraud (Oseni, 2017). Okunbor and Obaretin (as cited in Oseni, 2017) reported that the spates of corporate failures have placed greater responsibility and function on accountants to equip themselves with the skills to identify and act upon indicators of poor corporate governance, mismanagement, frauds and other wrong doings. It has become imperative for Accountants at all levels to have the requisite skills and knowledge for identifying, discovering as well as preserving the evidence of all forms of irregularities and fraud. Therefore, fraud requires more sophisticated approach from preventative to detection. One of the modern approaches that can be used from the prevention to detection is called Forensic Accounting.

According to Hopwood, Leiner, and Young (as cited in Oseni, 2017) to have define Forensic Accounting as the application of investigative and analytical skills for the purpose of resolving financial issues in a manner that meets standards required by courts of law. According to Curtis (2008), Forensic Accountants are essential to the legal system, providing expert services such as fake invoicing valuations, suspicious bankruptcy valuations, and analysis of financial documents in fraud schemes. He described forensic scientists as examiners and interpreters of evidence and facts in legal cases that also offers expert opinions regarding their findings in court of law. Dhar and Sarkar (2010) define forensic accounting as the application of accounting concepts and techniques to legal problems. It demands reporting, where accountability of the fraud is established and the report is considered as evidence in the court of law or in administrative proceedings. Forensic Accounting is a discipline that has its own models and methodologies of investigative procedures that search for assurance, attestation and advisory perspective to produce legal evidence. Forensic investigative skills are required to uncover and establish the occurrence of financial crimes due to the incidence of fraud and misappropriation of funds in recent time that is posing a threat to traditional auditing as a

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branch of accounting profession. It is concerned with the evidentiary nature of accounting data, and as a practical field concerned with accounting fraud and forensic auditing; compliance, due diligence and risk assessment; detection of Financial Misrepresentation and Financial Statement Fraud.

Financial Frauds Ehioghiren, &Atu, (2016) opined that financial crimes cannot be precisely defined but can be described. No one description suffices. Corruptions, bribes cronyism, nepotism, political donation, kickbacks, artificial pricing are frauds of all kinds to his description of financial crimes. Nwaze (as cited in Oseni, 2017) to have defined fraud as a predetermined as well as planned tricky process or device usually undertaken by a person or group of persons with the sole aim of cheating another person or organisation to gain ill-gotten advantage which would not have accrued in the absence of such deceptive procedure. Karwai (2002) is of the view that financial fraud in organizations vary widely in nature, character and method of operation in general. He reported that the identification of the causes of fraud is very difficult because modern day organizations frauds usually involve a complex web of conspiracy and deception that often mask the actual cause. It was noted by Nwaze (as cited in Oseni, 2017) recognised that fraud is perpetrated in many forms and usually has insiders (staff) and outsiders conniving together to successfully implement the act.

Fraud may be classified into two broad ways: nature of fraudsters and method employed in carrying out the fraud. On the basis of the nature of the fraudsters, fraud may be categorized into three groups, namely; internal, external and mixed frauds. Internal fraud relates to those committed by members of staff and directors of the organizations while external fraud is committed by persons outside the organization and mixed fraud involves outsiders colluding with the staff and directors of the organization. Although fraud affects the whole world, the magnitude of fraud in Nigeria and the extent to which the economy is affected is a call for alarm. Financial crimes are crime against property, involving the unlawful conversion of the ownership of property (belonging to another) to one's own personal use and benefit. Financial crimes may involve additional criminal acts, such as computer crime, elder abuse, burglary, and even violent crime such as armed robbery or murder. Financial crimes may be carried out by individuals, corporations, or by organized crime groups. Victims may include individuals, corporations, governments, and entire economies.

Fraud and Forensic Accounting

Forensic Accounting services have not been so much in demand in the previous decades due to the relatively low level rate of fraud. But in growing spate of corporate scandals and collapse of corporate organizations Izedonmi and Ibadin (as cited in Joseph, Okike& Yoko, 2016) instigated mainly by fraudulent activities of the management and people in position of managing and public funds have made the relevance of Forensic Accounting in building credibility and reliance on the operations more important. The importance of Forensic Accounting in cupping fraud is inevitable specifically in the Nigerian public sector where most management of the institutions are involved in one form of financial scandal or the other. Fraud is a factor of human desire to get rich quick. This criminality called fraud has eaten into the Nigerian system so deep that, it is now seen as regular behaviour in Nigeria. The Institute of Turkish History explains the word fraud as “a deceptive trick, scam, game, artifice, cabal which is committed to cheat, mislead someone” and “contributing something useless to something in

order to gain advantage” (Institute of Turkish History 1998). According to another definition, Fraud is “to create a misjudgment or maintain an existing misjudgment to induce somebody to make a contract” Arzova (as cited in Joseph, Okike & Yoko, 2016).

Fraud has no definite definition. Fraud can simply be put as an intentional act by an individual to deceive another individual in order to take possession of his/her financial or non-financial belongings for his/ benefit. The word “Forensic” is defined by Black’s Law Dictionary as “used in or suitable to courts of law or public debate.” Therefore, “Forensic Accounting” is actually litigation support involving accounting. National Institute of Justice (NIJ) of United States Special Report (2007) defines Forensic Accounting as the application of accounting principles, theories, and disciplines to facts or hypotheses at issue in a legal dispute, and encompasses every branch of accounting knowledge.

Also Bhasin (2007) says the integration of accounting, auditing and investigative skills creates the specialty known as Forensic Accounting. Forensic Accounting have been defined by Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) as Forensic Accounting is the use of professional accounting skills in matters involving potential or actual civil or criminal litigation, including, but not limited to, generally acceptable accounting and audit principles; the determination of lost profits, income, assets, or damages; evaluation of internal controls; fraud; and any other matter involving accounting expertise in the legal system. Forensic Accounting uses accounting, auditing, and investigative skills to conduct investigations into theft and fraud. Hence, Forensic Accounting is basically knowledge that encompasses the understanding of accounting, auditing, investigation, legal, psychology, computer and criminology in providing evidence needed in a litigation process.

Competent Skills Required of a Forensic Accountants

The Roles of Forensic Accountants

The principal role of a Forensic Accountant as an expert witness is to analyse, interpret, summarize and present complex business and financial deals in a logical, understandable manner supported with facts. An expert witness is a witness, who by virtue of education, training, skill, or experience, is believed to have knowledge in a particular subject beyond that of the average person, sufficient that others may officially (and legally) rely upon the witness's specialized (scientific, technical or other) opinion about an evidence or fact issued within the scope of their expertise, referred to as the expert opinion, as an assistance to the fact-finder. The Forensic Accountant should possess the following:

- i. Communicate Findings in the form of a report and supporting documents.
- ii. Assist in any legal proceedings.
- iii. Assist in obtaining documentation necessary to support or refute a claim.
- iv. Review of the relevant documentation to form an initial assessment of the case and identify areas of loss.
- v. Assist and attend the examination for discovery including the formulation of questions to be asked regarding the financial evidence.
- vi. Review of the opposing expert's damages report and reporting on both the strengths and weaknesses of the positions taken.
- vii. Assist with settlement discussions and negotiations.
- viii. Attend trial to hear the testimony of the opposing expert and to provide assistance with cross-examination.

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Challenges of Forensic Accounting Practice in Nigeria

With an upsurge in Financial Accounting frauds in the current economic scenario experienced, Financial Accounting fraud detection has become an emerging topic of great importance for academic, research and industries. The failure of internal auditing system of the organization in identifying the Accounting frauds has led to use of specialized procedures to detect Financial Accounting fraud, collectively known as Forensic Accounting (Modugu & Anyaduba, 2013). Rezaee, Crumbley, and Elmore (as cited in Oseni, 2017) reveal the following challenges confronting the application of Forensic Accounting:

- (a) The task of gathering information that is admissible in a court of law.
- (b) The admissibility, of evidence in compliance with the laws of evidence is crucial to successful prosecutions of criminal and civil claims.
- (c) Globalization of the economy and the fact that a fraudster can be based anywhere in the world has led to the problem of inter-jurisdiction.
- (d) The law is not always up to date with the latest advancements in technology.
- (e) Forensic Accounting is seen as an expensive service that only big companies can afford.
- (f) It is a new trend particularly in developing economies. Hence, Accountants with adequate technical know-how on forensic issues are hardly available.

The problems identified in Nigerian economy in area of financial and economic crimes are explained thus:

- a) Non-availability of the appropriate litigation support services in the court has led to misjudgment or incorrect submissions by lawyers and judges. It has been discovered that offenders are not given appropriate punishment because the gravity or extent of economic loss or damages cannot be adequately determined.
- b) The increasing rate of crime and corruption in the economy most especially in the area of economic governance and in public corporations have eroded public confidence and trust in matters regarding transparency and financial probity.
- c) There is weakness in traditional auditing style in curbing this socio-economic evil (economic and financial crimes) in the Nigerian economy.
- d) There is problem of battered image of the nation both locally and internationally. Nigeria has recorded huge loss of fund due to the bad image; Nigeria has not been able to attract Foreign Direct Investment expected of a developing economy.

Concept of Tax Administration in Nigeria

Corruption in tax administration in Africa remains a fundamental barrier to effective and fair taxation and to building trust between government and citizens. There are very few recent studies assessing the extent to which and how corruption affects Tax Administration in Africa, but surveys on citizen experience and perceptions of corruption within Tax Administration paint a worrying picture, with more than 50% of respondents who were in contact with Tax Administrations having reported experiencing corruption when dealing with Tax and custom officials in several African countries. Studies and anecdotal examples also demonstrate that corruption in tax administration takes different forms, from bribery to patronage, to revolving doors and regulatory capture. Approaches to fighting corruption in Tax Administration undertaken by governments in Africa often aim at addressing the main drivers

of corruption. They include measures to enhance the autonomy and capacity of Tax Agencies, for example through the establishment of semi-autonomous Tax agencies, higher salaries, measures to improve tax services and reduce tax-payers interactions with Tax Officials, by for instance investing in technology and Tax-Payer education, as well as measures to improve internal control and oversight and encourage informants to report corruption.

The Roles of Tax Administration in Nation Building

Tax administration plays a key role in ensuring that the right amount of Tax is collected at the right time and at minimal cost, while minimizing the burden to both the government and Tax-Payers (USAID 2013). Tax Officials thus are responsible for the administration of Tax collection and enforcement, including the registration and removal of Tax-Payers from the national registry, the collection of Tax dues (filling, payment and processing), the identification of Tax liabilities and the inspection and prosecution of alleged Tax Offences (Bridi 2010).

In addition, Tax Officers also play an important role in combating corruption as in the course of their work they may uncover corruption and other wrong doings (OECD 2014). Within this framework effective, efficient and capable Tax Authorities that uphold the highest ethical standards are instrumental to mobilise and administer domestic fiscal resources, enabling countries to provide basic services (Magashula 2010). This answer analyses the evidence of corruption in Tax Administration in Africa and discusses the main approaches that have been undertaken to prevent and curb corruption among Tax Authorities.

Evidence of Corruption in Tax Administration in Nigeria

There are very few recent studies assessing corruption in Tax Administration in Africa. The majority of studies available focus on assessing how effective Tax Administrations are (such as the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Program), but they do not deal specifically with corruption. There are many inefficiencies identified in those assessments, however, are also helpful to understand what the drivers of corruption in the region are. This section thus uses a set of corruption perception and experience indicators as well as anecdotal examples to provide an overview of how corruption affects Tax Administration in African countries, as well as the main causes for corruption. Perceptions and experience with corruption. The majority of African countries are perceived as very corrupt by their citizens. 90% of the countries in the Sub-Saharan African region performed poorly in the 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index, with scores below 50, on a scale from zero (very corrupt) to 100 (very clean) (Transparency International 2013a). Corruption affects a wide range of institutions and sectors, and corruption within the Tax Administration is rampant and particularly problematic when compared to other regions. Data from the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer shows the percentage of citizens reporting paying a bribe to officials in Tax Administration and / or customs in the African countries assessed is much higher than the global average. For instance, 61% of citizens in Sierra Leone who came in contact with such services reported having to pay bribes.

Forms of Corruption in Tax Practice in Nigeria

While there are very few recent studies investigating corruption within Tax Administrations, a few case studies and several anecdotal examples provide some evidence of

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the main forms of corruption involving Tax and Custom Officials. Examples of corrupt activities include (Kabera 2008; Child 2008):

- i. Bribery: Illegal payments to Tax/ Custom officials to reduce taxation or to be granted Tax exemptions, licenses, and clearances. Bribery can also be paid to speed up processes or to hold back a competitor's business activities. Illegal payments are often made through cash or gifts. In South Africa, for example, a custom official was convicted of corruption after being accused of receiving illegal payments in exchange for being charged lower tax rates. In Nigeria, rice importers have reported having to pay NGN 2.5 million per truck to custom officials to clear the border (United States Trade Representatives 2014).
- i. Illegal payments may also be made to Tax Officials to make files disappear or to sell insider information about competitors.
- ii. Revenue Fraud: In many countries revenue fraud through the undervaluation or under-declaration of goods (using fraudulent invoices) is facilitated by tax and / or customs officials. They also may be involved in smuggling activities allowing often illegal goods to be commercialized without Taxes being paid. For instance, several companies operating in the informal sector in Nigeria resort to smuggling instead of legal trade to avoid paying taxes, with the support of Tax Officials (Business Anti-Corruption Portal 2013).
- iii. Embezzlement: Tax Officials may dishonestly and illegally appropriate or divert funds they have been entrusted with for personal enrichment or other activities.
- iv. Extortion: Tax/ customs officials may take advantage of the lack of knowledge of taxpayers regarding Tax laws. They can use their power and threat in order to extort illicit payments from Tax-Payers.
- v. Tribal/Nepotism: In many African countries kinship and social networks still exercise influence – a person in a position of power is expected to use that influence to help his/her kin and community of origin. Within Tax Administrations, tribal networks can negatively influence the appointment, selection, transfer and promotion of officials.
- vi. Regulatory Capture: In countries with widespread corruption there is also the risk that well-connected companies exercise undue influence on how laws and regulations are decided. The US Climate Investment Statement for instance highlights that in Nigeria many companies report having 'negotiated' their own taxation levels using their personal connections or bribing officials (US Department of State 2013).
- vii. Collusion Between Tax Officers and Tax Payers: There is also evidence that corruption in Tax Administration takes place in a more organised manner with Tax Officials and Tax-Payers acting together to systematically evade Taxes (Kabera 2008).
- viii. Political Interference: Politics may intervene in the Tax Administration to grant favours to the private sector such as Tax exemptions to supporters or to harass political opponents through audits.
- ix. Revolving Doors: A “revolving door” is a practice whereby an individual moves back and forth between public office and private companies exploiting his/her period of government service to benefit the company [he or she] used to regulate (Transparency International 2009). Revolving doors is increasingly becoming a problem in Tax Administration in Africa. Tax Officers can be recruited by the private sector as they have insider knowledge (and connections) on the operations of revenue authorities.

Approaches to Curbing Corruption in Tax Administration in Nigeria

For many years, Tax Administration reform had the primary aim of expanding revenue collection. It has been quite successful in doing so and many African countries have experienced an increase in revenue in the past decade. Nevertheless, these reforms have not necessarily helped to reduce or control corruption. In some cases, the amount of rents available for being extracted by corrupt officials have increased but stronger accountability measures have not followed. As a result, the availability of more financial resources has not always translated into better services and overall better governance.

While they do not necessarily have the primary aim of curbing corruption, many of the approaches used to enhance tax administrations' capacity and effectiveness focus on closing loopholes and fixing inefficiencies that are also the main drivers of corruption, including for instance measures to: (i) simplify the tax system and limit tax officials' discretionary powers, (ii) increase tax administration's autonomy, reducing the opportunities for political interference, (iii) enhance tax administration capacity; (iv) improve tax services; and (v) strengthen monitoring and oversight. Countries have also adopted specific measures aimed at enhancing ethics and integrity within the tax administration. These include for instance the adoption of codes of conduct, rules on asset declaration, and ethical trainings.

i. Creation of Semi-Autonomous Agencies

The most popular and the most discussed approach to tax administration reform implemented in Africa is the establishment of semi-autonomous revenue authorities (ARAs). Prior to the creation of ARAs, tax collection was often under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance but dispersed among a number of departments that did not work in a coordinated fashion and offered several opportunities for rent-seeking (ATAF 2012).

According to experts, the creation of ARAs aimed, among other things, at giving more autonomy to tax administration agencies and ensuring more independence from governments and politicians, in a signal that "the power to tax will not be abused".

ii. Simplification of Tax Policy, Systems and Processes

The simplification of tax rules, including the reduction in number of taxes, the level of tax rates and the number of tax exemptions may help limit the discretion of tax officials and at the same time make it easier for tax-payers to understand their rights and obligations (Child 2008). Similarly, the simplification, standardisation and harmonisation of tax procedures are also important to reduce corruption within tax administration. Simpler and more streamlined processes to pay and collect taxes reduce tax officials' discretionary power, increase predictability, lessening the burden for firms and individuals to comply and hence reduce the opportunities for corruption (Rahman, as cited in Maira, 2014).

iii. Reorganisation of Tax Administration by Type of Tax- Payer and Function

Tax administrations are typically organised on the basis of three models: (i) tax-type, where the tax administration is divided according to the different types of tax (corporate tax, value-added tax, income tax, custom duties); (ii) functional, where the division of work related to the different functions performed by the tax administration (processing tax returns, auditing, adjudication and appeals, or collecting taxes; and (iii) tax-payer segmentation, where the

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division of work relates to the different types of tax-payer (large, small or specific industrial/economic sectors) (ATAF 2012).

iv. Introduction of Self-Assessment

Self-assessment, the system through which tax-payers have to calculate themselves their own liabilities, file returns and pay the taxes, was basically non-existent in Africa until the introduction of value-added tax. Currently, it has also been extended to other types of taxes. In general, self-assessment is considered to have a positive impact on the control of corruption as it reduces the opportunities for negotiations between tax-payers and tax officials and also streamlines procedures (Rahman, as cited in Maira, 2014).

Use of Technology

In recent times, African governments have turned towards increasing the use of technology in the administration of taxes. Information technology (IT) tools can play an important role in tax administration modernisation. For instance, an electronic system for filing and paying taxes, if implemented well and used by most taxpayers, reduces operational costs for administering tax and increases tax compliance. It may also provide for a reduction of corruption, which is more likely to occur with in-person payments at tax offices (World Bank & IFC 2014). Technology can also increase the efficiency of the tax administration and improve tax operations by providing online information on taxpayer rights and obligations through call centres or virtual helpdesks.

v. Improving Tax-Payers' Services

Taxpayer services are one of the primary areas where corruption occurs in revenue administration. As mentioned, simpler and more reliable procedures, more transparent processes and fewer interactions between taxpayers and tax officials may help to reduce corruption and improve compliance (Bridi 2010). Moreover, incentives for corruption can be further reduced by improving tax-payers knowledge and awareness of their rights and obligations, reducing tax compliance costs and adopting customer orientation.

vii. Strengthening the Integrity Framework

Tax and custom officials should be held to the highest standards of professional behaviour. Safeguarding the integrity of a tax administration requires a clear, consistent framework of rules and standards of behaviour that employees must adhere to. A set of dissuasive and proportional sanctions should also be in place. A variety of tools and techniques can be used by tax administration to limit the opportunities for misconduct, including rotating staff, controlling/restricting staff access to files or areas of work, establishing code of conduct and requirements to declare assets and conflicts of interest as well as providing ethical training and guidance.

viii. Enactment of a Code of Conduct for Tax Officials

Codes of conduct are usually established to address a wide variety of issues and ethical dilemmas that are part of the revenue officials' daily operations. Many codes of conduct for revenue administration officials also include social and cultural norms that are context specific. Codes also spell out what is expected from officials when confronted with corruption or other forms of wrongdoings (Martini 2013).

ix. Strengthening Internal Investigations

The majority of countries have focused on reforms that would more directly support revenue mobilization, and less attention has been paid to strengthening internal investigations mechanisms. These however are essential to detect corruption and mismanagement within tax agencies as well as to act as deterrent for futures cases. If the risk of being caught increases, tax officials may reconsider getting involved in corruption schemes.

Concept of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

The preponderance of Economic and Financial Crimes like Advance Fee Fraud (419) money laundering have had severe negative consequences on Nigeria including decreased Foreign Direct investments in the country and tainting of Nigeria's National Image. The menace of these crimes and the recognition of the magnitude and gravity of the situation led to the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). The legal instrument backing the commission is the Economic and Financial Crime Commission establishment Act 2002 and the Commission has high level support from the presidency, the legislature and key security and law enforcement Agencies.

It will be recalled that before now, Nigeria was ranked the 3rd most corrupt country in the world by transparency international in 2004 (BBC News 2004 retrieved) and during the visit of President Bill Clinton to Nigeria, he wanted President Obasanjo to take him to a place called "Oluwole" in Lagos. "Oluwole" is situated in the heart of Eko by Nnamdi Azikiwe Street of Lagos known at that time as the centre for all counterfeits documents or instruments. This to President Obasanjo was a serious blow to his nation (Dr. Umoh class session). All these and many more image damaging circumstances impressed on President Obasanjo the need for the establishment of the two commissions, the ICPC and the EFCC to tackle corruption in Nigeria.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act, 2004

The EFCC was established for the enforcement and the due administration of the provision of the EFCC Act, to investigate all financial crime and economic crimes. The Commission by the Act is empowered to prevent, investigates prosecute and penalize economic and financial crimes and is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the provision of other laws and regulations relating to economic and financial crimes. Other enabling laws passed in relation to this Act including the following:

- i. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act, 2002.
- ii. The Money Laundering Act, 1995
- iii. The Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2004
- iv. The Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offenses Act, 1995
- v. The Failed Bank (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act, 1994
- vi. The Banks and other Financial Institutions and Miscellaneous Offenses Act, 1991

In addition, EFCC will be the Agency of government responsible for fighting terrorism by these acts the EFCC now has the overall function of investigating all financial crimes including advance fee fraud, money laundering counterfeiting of instruments/ documents, illegal charge transfer, future market fraud fraudulent encashment of negotiable instruments, computer credit and fraud and contract scam.

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The commission is also empowered to coordinate and enforce all economic and financial laws and enforcement function. Conferred on any person, authorize the adoption of measures to identify, trace, freeze, confiscate or seize proceed derived from terrorist activities, Economic and Financial Crime related offences or the properties, the value of which corresponds to such proceeds. The agency is also to adopt measures to rid the country of economic and financial crimes. The measures will include the co-ordination of prevention and regulation, introduction and maintenance of investigative control techniques on the prevention of economic and financial related crimes. It is also to ensure the rapid exchange of scientific and technical information and the conduct of joint operation geared towards the eradication of economic and financial crimes.

Explanations on Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

Economic and financial crimes are non-violent and illicit activities committed with a view to acquiring illegal wealth individually or in a group in an organized manner. Thereby violating regulations concerning economic crimes e.g. illegal oil bunkering, illegal mining, bribery dumping of toxic waste, smuggling, fraud (419) etc. According to J. S. Nye corruption is a deviation from the “normal duties of a public role for private pecuniary or status gains such violations of duties or rules include bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust) nepotism appointment by ascription rather than by merit and misappropriation of public resources for private gains (Girling, as cited in Raimi, Suara & Fadipe, 2013).

The pioneer Chairman of ICPC, Hon. Justice Mustapha Akanbi, views corruption as the Abuse of public office for private gains. The public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits or extorts bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public offices can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets or the diversion of state revenue (The World Bank) report, retrieved.

Composition of the EFCC

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission has at its apex, the chairman with four years tenure of office. The appointment of the chairman is made by the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to be ratified by the senate. The first chairman during Obasanjo’s administration was Nuhu Ribadu (2003-2007). 2nd chairman Mrs. Farida Wazira (2007-2011) current chairman Mr. Ibrahim L’Aamode (Nov. 23, 2011 to date). The composition of the EFCC is the Director General of the Department of the State Security Services, (SSS) DG of NIA, Customs Immigration, Prisons, and Representative of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Governor of CBN and The inspector General of Police.

Circumstances Leading to the Establishment of the EFCC

Before the establishment of the commission, Nigeria had been stigmatized by the international community as being corrupt. This was because there had been several failed campaign in the past to wipe out corruption or reduce it to a tolerable level. These attempts include the Jaji Declaration in 1977 by General Olusegun Obasanjo. The ethical revolution of President Shehu Shagari in 1981, the war against indiscipline by General Muhammadu Buhari in

1984; the National orientation movement by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida in 1986, the mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction by General Babangida in 1987 and the war against indiscipline and corruption in 1996 by General Sani Abacha. The penal and criminal codes contained provisions which are meant to prohibit and punish corruption.

However, the corrupt practices and other related offences Act 2000 brought to being President Olusegun Obasanjo, which set up the Anti-corruption commission is actually getting people sanctioned.

Vision and Mission of the EFCC

The vision of EFCC is to be the second agent of change in the war against corruption and corrupt practices in the polity and thereby restore Nigeria to the enable standard of respectability, dignity and honour within the comity of Nations. The mission of EFCC is to employ all available legal means to rid Nigerian of greed, avarice and all vestiges of corruption and thus promote transparency, property, accountability and integrity in the public and private lives of all Nigerians.

The effectiveness of the EFCC as a prosecuting agency By virtue of the provisions of the EFCC Act, 53 the Commission has adopted criminal prosecution as its primary tool in the anti-corruption crusade. Based on data obtained through interviews with judicial officers, ACA officers, documentary analysis and participation in various focus group discussions on Nigeria's anti-corruption drive organised under the ACE project in Abuja on 16 August 2018, this section examines how effective the EFCC is in fulfilling its criminal enforcement and prosecution mandate, particularly with respect to high profile prosecutions. The EFCC has recorded some reasonable achievements since its establishment; however certain responsibilities have been constrained as a result of the political corruption described in section 3. The productivity levels of the EFCC can be evaluated by comparing the number of petitions received by the EFCC with the number of cases investigated, prosecuted and then finally the number of successful convictions secured. Our computation of the petitions received, rejected and investigated, and eventual arrests and successful prosecutions is limited by the fact that the EFCC does not have a comprehensive data base to record this information. Our analysis can provide an indication of trends that can be opened up for detailed analysis in future papers, however.

It should also be noted that the data analysed in this report does not indicate the number of convictions that are on appeal before the appellate courts, as the convictions data is restricted to prosecutions and/or convictions at the Federal High Court, the High Courts of the States and the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. Between May 2003 and June 2004 the EFCC is reported to have recovered money and assets worth over N700 billion and to have arrested over 500 advance fee fraud kingpins (Ogbu, as cited in Onyema, Roy, Oredola&Ayinla, 2018). Furthermore, between 2003 and 2006, the EFCC arraigned around 300 persons and secured 92 convictions (Osipitan and Odusote, Onyema, Roy, Oredola&Ayinla, 2018). Again in 2006, the EFCC is said to have received 4,200 petitions on illegal corruption, investigated 1,200 petitions and instituted 406 corruption cases in court (Obuah, Onyema, Roy, Oredola&Ayinla, 2018). Between 2010 and 2014, the EFCC recovered a total of N65.3 billion, which is equivalent to about US\$360 million, while in 2015 it recovered N141.9 billion which is equivalent to about US\$715million (EFCC Landmark Achievement)Premised on the fact that the EFCC's emphasis is on prosecution for economic and financial crimes, the best data points for

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an evaluation of the Commission's effectiveness would be: the number of petitions filed with the commission; the number of petitions that resulted in investigations having excluded the irrelevant and non-criminal investigations; the number of prosecutions arising from investigations; and finally the number of convictions culminating from prosecutions and taking into account the number of convictions against acquittals. Furthermore, it is important to ascertain the number of convictions secured by the EFCC that were affirmed by the appellate courts and those that were overturned on appeal.

Factors that Constrain the Effectiveness of the EFCC in Nigeria

In 2015 the former Minister of Finance of Nigeria, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, asserted that Nigerian institutions – including ACAs – are weak and that the country lacks the adequate institutions, systems and processes to combat corruption (Premium Times, 2015). Hence, an effective fight against corruption requires the building of strong institutions with firm rules that are applicable to all classes of the citizenry and that is not susceptible to political interference. Three capacity deficiencies have been identified as obstacles to the efficiency of African ACAs, namely: (a) continuous political interference in the fight against corruption; (b) lack of technical capacity of staff in terms of training and expertise that enables crime detection and the conduct of credible and forensic investigations; and (c) operational incapacity which is caused by insufficient funding (Hope 2017). For the purpose of our analysis we group these deficiencies as 'political capture' (a) and 'organisational deficiencies' (b and c), and also discuss the impact of the judicial process on the functioning of the EFCC.

i. Political Interference of the EFCC

A review of EFCC prosecutions reveals a significant number of cases involving politically exposed persons such as former governors and government ministers that have been filed since 2007 and have seen very limited progress. Similarly, investigations into allegations of corrupt practices against politically exposed persons have also seen limited progress. The fight against corruption in Nigeria can be described as a fight against an oligarchy with immense resources to fight back, with the EFCC failing to successfully prosecute top government officials. Indeed, out of about 31 former governors, only two, Dariye and Nyame have been recently convicted and these convictions have been affirmed by the Court of Appeal but with a reduction in the sentence term from 14 years to 10 years and 12 years⁶¹ Furthermore, the leadership of the EFCC has not been free from political capture either. In 2008, for example, the pioneering chairman of the EFCC, Nuhu Ribadu, was abruptly removed from his post and surreptitiously demoted under the guise of sending him for a course at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies to become Deputy Commissioner of Police (Alaneme and Ashamu, as cited in Onyema, Roy, Oredola & Ayinla, 2018).

ii. Organisational Deficiencies of the EFCC

The effectiveness of the EFCC is also determined by its internal organisation and continued training of professionally qualified personnel. The EFCC Annual Report for 2013 identified as one of its operational challenges the 'dearth of consistent training of officers to meet the exigencies that are peculiar to the ever changing nature of economic and financial crimes (EFCC, 2013: 84); the 2015 Annual Report later stated that 'Training is essential because it equips officers with the requisite skills and information on best practices in law enforcement.

If we are to succeed in the fight against corruption, training must be adequately funded' (EFCC, 2015: 130).

The weakness of the institution further manifests in the failure of the EFCC to conduct thorough criminal investigations and the resulting inadequacies of criminal prosecutions that are struck out on technicalities. In the course of an interview with a Justice of the Court of Appeal, the individual mentioned that he had witnessed investigations being conducted ineptly by police officials of the EFCC, which culminated in criminal prosecutions floundering on technical grounds. He attributed the ineffectiveness of the EFCC in prosecution to the lack of professional and investigatory exposure of the police officers, who are largely oblivious to international best practices and adopt crude and rudimentary approaches.

A final organisational obstacle to the efficient running of the EFCC is inadequate funding, with it claimed that lack of assets such as vehicles have prevented the Commission from carrying out investigations, arrests and prosecutions (EFCC, 2015). When Acting Chairman of the EFCC, Mr Magu, presented his 2017 budget proposal of N17.2 billion, the Senate promised to provide the EFCC with adequate funding for its operations (EFCC, 2017), which it can be said has resulted in the completion of the Commission's head office and the provision of infrastructures within it.

Some commentators suggested that inefficiencies of the Nigerian legal system has prevented the EFCC from fulfilling its mandate, with the EFCC itself associating some of its challenges to judicial hostility and delay in courts. It is important to note, however, that while delays may persist at the lower courts, the Court of Appeal has sought to mitigate the effect of delays in the justice system by providing for a system of fast-tracking criminal appeals through its 2013 Practice Direction No. 64 This legislation mandates that the presiding Justice of each division of the Court of Appeal, in conjunction with the Deputy Chief Registrars of the division, ensures that their registries give priority to the listing, consideration and determination of all applications and substantive appeals related to agencies such as the EFCC, the ICPC and other recognised LEAs.⁶⁵ Similar provisions are found in the Supreme Court (Criminal Appeals) Practice Directions 2013. As a result, adjournment on criminal matters that usually takes three to four months at the Court of Appeal and possibly as long as seven to eight months at the Supreme Court are now usually adjourned for two weeks to one month with the new Practice Direction. In recognition that delayed criminal proceedings prevent the effective administration of criminal justice, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Courts issued their respective practice directions to also mitigate delay in the administration of criminal judges. In *Dasuki v Federal Republic of Nigeria* ⁶⁶ the Supreme Court recognised the necessity of a speedy trial and implored the court and the parties (including their counsel) to avoid any antics aimed at delaying the determination of the matter.

iii. Obstacles to Effective Prosecution of Corrupt Practices and Financial Crimes in Nigeria

Ribadu (as cited in Oseni, 2017) stated that corruption and other economic crimes are the bane of Nigeria economic development efforts. All the crimes harm the economy in no small measures.

Those who are saddled with the responsibility of fighting crimes will do well if they do not compromise, thereby making corruption a little monster to be crushed with ease. He however, outlined the following factors that affected the prosecuting of criminals:

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- a) Cooperation from persons/institutions who should furnish relevant information.
- b) The quality of evidence gathered at the investigation stage.
- c) The transparency of investigation of the case itself.
- d) The prosecutorial competes of the prosecuting counsel.
- e) The transparency and fairness of the presiding judge in the trail.
- f) Inadequacy of existing procedural and evidence laws.
- g) Congestion and slow pace of court proceedings.
- h) Jurisdiction problems.
- i) Cost of investigation and prosecution.

iv. Conditions Favourable to Corrupt Practices in Nigeria

Oladipupo, Khan (as cited in Romanus, 2014) identified the following as conditions that makes the perpetration of corrupt practices easy or possible, as this will assist the forensic accountant to intensify his effort and to carry out a detail job where these conditions exist. In other words, such situations increase the probability of fraud being committed. Such situations include; concentration of power in decision makers who are not directly accountable to the people as often seen in non-democratic regimes, lack of government transparency in decision-making, costly political campaigns, large amount of public capital in a project, self interested close cliques, weak legal profession, poorly paid government officials, apathetic, uninterested or gullible populace that fail to give adequate attention to political processes, absent of adequate control to prevent bribery, lack of adequate segregation of duties and so on. Organizations have identified collusion between employees and third parties as the most significant factor contributing to fraud in most developing countries including Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Fraud Triangle

Experts over time have attempted to formulate theories that explain the mind set of fraudsters. Unless Forensic Accountants understand the way the fraudster thinks, they will not be able to keep one step ahead of the fraudster. Dada, (2014) opined that Forensic Accounting relies on the Fraud Triangle to find weak points in business processes and identify possible suspects in cases of fraud. It consists of three core concepts that together create a situation ripe for fraud; incentive, opportunity and rationalization. He stressed that people must have the incentive and opportunity to commit financial fraud as well as the ability to justify it. He opined further that recent analysis has suggested adding a fourth concept to make a diamond: capability. Just because someone has the opportunity or incentive to steal, it doesn't mean that they have the capability to do so.

For example, if someone doesn't understand how to do journal or ledger entries, they wouldn't know how to manipulate the numbers no matter what the incentive or opportunity is. Theoretically, anyone has the potential to engage in financial reporting fraud; indeed, some individuals who commit fraud had previous reputations for high integrity. According to Crumbley (2003) three factors, referred to as the "fraud triangle," often combine to lead individuals to commit fraud: pressure or an incentive to engage in fraud; a perceived opportunity; and the ability to rationalize fraudulent behavior. The concept is explained below;

i. *Pressure to commit fraud*: Pressure whether internal or external can be either a positive or a negative force. When goals are achievable, pressure contributes to creativity, efficiency, and competitiveness. According to him, he however noted that temptations for misconduct arise when goals do not appear to be attainable by normal means, yet pressure continues unabated, with career advancement, compensation, and even continued employment at risk. He claims that ‘When pressure is transformed into an obsessive determination to achieve goals no matter what the cost, it becomes unbalanced and potentially destructive. That is when individuals are most likely to resort to questionable activities that may lead to fraud’.

ii. *Opportunity for fraud*: Crumbley explained that even when pressure is extreme, financial reporting fraud cannot occur unless an opportunity is present. Opportunity according to him has two aspects:

The inherent susceptibility of the company’s accounting to manipulation, and the conditions within the company that may allow a fraud to occur. The nature of the company’s business and accounting can provide sources of opportunity for fraud in the form of significant related- party transactions outside the ordinary course of business; a large volume of estimates of assets, liabilities, revenues, or expenses that are subjective or difficult to corroborate; and isolated, large transactions. Some large transactions, especially those close to period-end, can pose complex “substance over form” questions that provide opportunities for management to engage in fraudulent reporting.

The opportunity for fraud is also affected by a company’s internal environment, which is largely influenced by the entity’s culture and the effectiveness of its internal controls.

iii. *Rationalization of fraud*: Individuals who commit financial reporting fraud possess a particular mindset that allows them to justify or excuse their fraudulent actions. Where the motivation for fraud is more altruistic than personal—to save jobs or keep the company afloat—the pressure to commit fraud also can become the rationalization for it. The process of rationalization, according to Crumbley, (2006) often starts with justifying ‘a small nudge to the boundaries of acceptable behavior but then deteriorates into a wholesale loss of objectivity’. For any crime to be perpetrated, then the three steps which are pressure, opportunity and rationalization must have been in place, for it to be successful. This research sheds light to the fact that through Forensic Accounting techniques, all these acts can be identified on time for proper preventive action taken alongside it.

Empirical Review of Literature

The growing demand for Forensic Accounting is a known characteristic of most companies in the world. Presently, Forensic Accounting is gaining popularity worldwide. Forensic Accounting arises from the effect and cause of crime and technical error made by people. Forensic Accounting is quite new in Nigeria as companies have realized that the service of a Forensic Accountant is needed as crime cases have substantially increased in number. Forensic Accounting is the application of financial skills and investigative mentality to unsettled issues, conducted within the context of the rules of evidence (Arokiasamy and Cristal, 2009). Singleton, Singleton, Bologna, and Lindquist, (2006) assert that Forensic Accounting as a discipline encompasses fraud knowledge, financial expertise, and a sound knowledge and understanding of business reality and the working of the legal system. Forensic accounting may be one of the most effective and efficient way to decrease and check accounting fraud.

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Investigative and Auditing Support Services in Eradicating Uncompleted Projects Despite Full Disbursement

Evidences are bound in the records of anti-graft agencies about how corruption is quite endemic (Ribadu, 2006). Fluctuating revenue and over dependence on oil revenue, unstable economic parameters, for example price level and unemployment affect budgetary lack of effective budget monitoring that is the execution of the budget, delay in approval of project proposal by the Ministry and the Legislature (Skousen and Wright, 2008). The unceasing abandonment of development projects is so shocking in the developing countries such that Nigeria has remained one of the countries in such difficulty (Omolehinwa, 2003). Therefore, it is important to stress that the incessant abandonment of projects would bring several effects on real properties and its values and the economy at large. The abandonment of development projects is the act of discontinuing any activities or maintenance works on such development project within a time frame of the contract agreement and with no intention of returning back to the development (Omolehinwa, 2003) For a better and effective budget implementation below are some guidelines suggested by (Omolehinwa, 2011):

- i. The budget should be prepared on timely basis and approved by the National Assembly preferably before the beginning of the financial year. This also ensures that there is a meaningful cash plan by the Accountant- General as required by section 26 of fiscal responsibility Act.
- ii. The President must learn how to avoid pressure (from various stakeholders especially the legislators) to include in the Budget Proposal already submitted to the National Assembly new projects that were not properly designed.
- iii. In order to assess the right amount of fund they need at the right time, they must prepare on timely basis the project procurement document and meet the requirements for obtaining certificate of objection to the award of contract.
- iv. Planning documentation and works specifications should be readily available for the purpose of assessing capital project performance.
- v. The government should review its basis of recording financial transactions so as to evaluate the government's ability to finance its activities and meet its liabilities when the need arises.

Litigation Support Services in Improving Efficiency of Anti-Graft Agencies

Evidence abound that the wave of economic and financial crimes in Nigeria is on the high side and even in the whole world at large. No wonder, a high level of expertise is necessary to analyze current complicated financial transactions and events (Razaee, Crumbley and Elmore, 2006). They therefore stressed that Forensic Accounting has been thrown into the forefront of the crusade against financial deception. Degboro and Olofinsola (2007) noted that Forensic investigation is about the determination and establishment of fact in support of legal case. This implies that to use Forensic techniques to detect and investigate a crime is to expose all its attending features and identify the culprits. In the view of Howard and Sheetz (2006), the Forensic Accountant in this dispensation should 'interpret, summarize and present complex financial issues clearly, succinctly and factually often in a court of law as an expert'. Forensic Accountant should use accounting discipline to help determine facts in business litigation (Okunbor and Obaretin, 2010).

According to Curtis (2008), Forensic Accountants are 'essential to the legal system, providing expert services such as fake invoicing valuations, suspicious bankruptcy valuations, and analysis of financial documents in fraud schemes'. These Forensic Accountants calculate values, draw conclusions and identify irregular patterns or suspicious transactions by critically analyzing the financial data (Arokiasamy and Cristal, 2009). It provides an 'accounting analysis to the court for dispute resolution in certain cases and it also provides the court with explanation to the fraud that has been committed'. That is why Forensic Accounting may play a vital role in detecting and reducing accounting fraud in the public sector according to them. In this concept, Forensic Accountants provide an account analysis to determine the facts necessary to resolve a dispute before it is brought before the court or the lawsuit process takes its course (Ozkul and Pamukc, 2012).

The occupational fraud committed by employees according to Aderibigbe, (2000) usually involves 'the theft of assets and embezzlement and the involvement of employees in kickback schemes or conversion of corporate assets for personnel use, the Forensic Accountant can intervene and observed the suspected examination of assets, invigilation, inspection of documents and interview of those involved to control such practices'. Experience and these types of engagement enable the Forensic accountant to offer suggestions as to internal controls that owners could implement to reduce the likelihood of fraud. Besides, the Forensic Accountant according to Owojori and Asaolu, (2009) also engages himself in 'criminal investigation on behalf of police force, where his report is prepared with the objectives of presenting evidence in a professional and concise manner. These assumptions often involve a detailed analysis of numerous years accounting records to quantify the issues in dispute. He needs an understanding of legal issue of business activities'.

The Forensic Accountant they stressed can thus be of assistance in various ways that include investigative accounting, review of the factual situation and provision of suggestion, regarding possible courses of actions, assisting with the professional and recovery of assets and co-ordination of other experts. Government efforts at combating crimes in Nigeria remains mired in corruption, crime, poverty and violence despite the promulgation of several laws like in other countries as the principal mechanism for curbing corruption.

Expert Witnessing in Eradicating Diversion of Unutilized Allocated Funds

Expert witnessing help the Forensic Accountant to familiarize himself with the dealings of fraudsters and also provide a foundation for his investigation. Dada, Enyi, and Owolabi (2013), opined that after all the required information had been gotten, for the economy to grow, a Forensic Accountant when engaged will look into the pre-political post period for the people holding public office and also the post- political era in the discovering of assets owned by them and valuing all their assets to verify the misappropriation of public funds. They stressed further that the first step to be taken by a Forensic Accountant is to investigate into the location of hidden assets. Omolehinwa (2013), observed that there is adverse consequences of leaving funds budgeted for implementing projects unspent. He noted that:

'Most Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Nigeria's .Government as well as State Governments including their own MDAs have been publishing huge sums (of money) that they have returned to the public treasury'. It seems according to him that the MDAs returning unspent funds are eager to exhibit their non-corruptive credentials. 'Leaving funds unspent translates into abandonment of projects or

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components of them as a form of failure to implement projects and programmes designed to achieve development’.

He also reiterated that experts need to pay attention to monitoring and evaluation of the projects on which budgeted funds are being returned. This is necessary so as to assess the transformation of corruption from the stealing of money to the stealing of government time and/or abandonment of duties and responsibilities if any. Once the Forensic Accountant has finished the interview process, he has several common methods at his disposal to determine where assets are hidden using the expenditure method to prove the existence of hidden assets and income by comparing total personal expenditures to reported income. Dada, Enyi, and Owolabi, (2013) opined that hidden income and assets that can be investigated include tax returns, financial statements prepared for bank loan or financial statements prepared from the courts. Also the public records can be looked into by the Forensic Accountant through interviews thus the information would lead to a search in any particular location that suggests an unusual spending pattern.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design for this study was based on non-experimental descriptive/survey design of collecting and analyzing data. Survey design was adopted in the study because it allows data to be collected from a sample with the aim of discovering the relationship or interactions among variables (Adefila, 2008, Izedonmi, 2005). Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. The targeted populations of this study were the management, junior and senior staff of Office of the Accountant General of the State, State Ministry of Finance, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independence Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), State Inland Revenue Service (SIRS) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB).

Population of the Study

The targeted population of this study are all the management, senior and junior members of staff of the Office of the Accountant General of Osun State (55), Osun State Ministry of Finance (35), Osun State Internal Revenue Service (OSIRS) (25), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (30), Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) (22) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) (28). The total population of management, senior and junior members of staff the agencies is two hundred (200). The study considered all members of staff within the above categories in these agencies as qualified members of the population because of their knowledge and understanding about the implications of the activities of Tax Practitioners, Forensic Accountants and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission at curbing corruption in Osun State, Nigeria in the respective agencies.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In determining the samples size, Yaro Yamane (1968) formula used to select sample from the population.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size; N = Total Population; 1 = Constant; e = Allowable margin of error.

In this case, 5% (0.05) was considered adequate error margin $(e)^2 = (0.05) = 0.0025$

$n = 200 / 1 + 200(0.0025)$; $n = 200 / 1 + 0.5$; $n = 200 / 1.5$; $n = 133$

The sample size $n = 133$

Research Instrument

The evaluation process was done through the use of well structured questionnaire containing a likert-type questions. The Likert scale points used was as follows: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was the major instrument used in collecting data. The questions comprised two sections. First section comprised questions relating to bio-data of respondents while the second section contained questions relating to the subject matter.

Method of Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistical analytical methods were utilized for this study. The descriptive methods such as frequency distribution, tables and percentages, were used to analytically present the data collected from the respondents across the agencies. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and Inferential Statistics were also employed to test hypotheses for the study.

Research Questions

The research questions below are drawn to guide the study for the purpose of clarity and close understanding of the project are as follows:

- i. How do the activities of Tax Practitioners influence corrective measures on corruption and financial crimes eradication in Osun State, Nigeria?
- ii. How does Forensic Accounting relate with good corporate governance for public confidence and eradication of crimes and corruption in Osun State, Nigeria?
- iii. How does Forensic Accounting fill the gap created by traditional auditing style in curbing the socio- economic evils of economic and financial crimes?
- iv. How does Economic and Financial Crime Commission serve as preventive agency in curbing corruption in Osun State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

Having outlined the purpose of this research two hypotheses were stated and to be tested in our analysis.

- H₀₁:** Activities of Tax Practitioners do not influence corrective measures in areas of corruption and financial crimes eradication in Osun State, Nigeria.
- H₀₂:** Forensic Accountants activities have no significant relationship with good corporate governance for public confidence and eradication of crimes and corruption in Osun State, Nigeria.
- H₀₃:** Forensic Accounting cannot fill the gap created by traditional auditing style in curbing the socio- economic evils of economic and financial crime in Osun State, Nigeria.
- H₀₄:** Economic and Financial Crimes Commission does not serve as a preventive agency in curbing corruption in Osun State, Nigeria.

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Test of Hypotheses

Pearson Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. For any given phenomenon whereby prior knowledge about the state of nature is known but not specific or certain just as the challenges that specifically militate against internal and external auditors at the federal government agencies from carrying out their professional service are not actually known. Pearson correlation method is then used to determine whether there is a relationship between Expected frequencies of responses regarding the phenomenon and the Observed frequencies. If any significant relationship exists, it means that the hypothesis opinion about the phenomenon is true and it will be accepted.

Validity of the Instrument

A research instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it purports to measure. There are many ways this can be ascertained but in this study, the researchers considered both face and content validity methods as being appropriate. In achieving this, few copies of the instrument were given to the research experts for validation. While the instrument was vetted and certified valid (Face Validity), it was also critically assessed to ensure that the contents of the instrument measures what the overall study is all about (Content Validity). Corrections and adjustments were made to enrich the validity of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method was used for this study. The justification for using this method and not any other, such as Test-retest was because of their inherent shortcomings which Cronbach Alpha relieves. The researchers subjected the responses obtained from the pilot survey to testing the reliability via SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 20.0.

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussions Of Findings

Analysis of Demographic Information

Demographic information of respondents was enquired. Information sought included gender, age, marital status, and position in the organisation. Furthermore, educational qualification, professional qualification and working years of experience.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Questionnaires

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned	125	94.0
Unreturned	8	6.00
Total	133	100

Source: field survey, 2019.

According to Table 4.1, the study targeted a sample of 133 respondents. However, out of 133 questionnaires distributed 125 respondents completely filled in and returned the questionnaires, this represented 94.0% response rate. This is a reliable response rate for analysis as response rate is sufficient for analysis and presentation of the data. However, 6.0% of the respondent were reluctant to responded to fill the questionnaire this was due to reasons like, the respondent were not available to fill them in at the required time and even after subsequent follow-up there were no positive reactions from them.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	54	43.2	43.2	43.2
	Female	71	56.8	56.8	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

In Table 4.2, the study aimed to establish the distribution of respondent's gender. According to the data collected most (56.8%) of the respondents were female while the rest 43.2% were male. This implies that majority of most of the employees in regulatory bodies are female while their counterpart occupies only small portion.

Table 4.3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 25	29	23.2	23.2	23.2
	25-35	52	41.6	41.6	64.8
	36-40	24	19.2	19.2	84.0
	Above 40	20	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

As shown by Table 4.3 the study revealed that 23.2% of the respondents were below 25 years, 41.6% of aged 25-35 years, and 19.2% of aged 36-40 years while 16.0% were 40 years above. This depicts that majority of the regulatory bodies employees were aged between 25-35 years as shown by a total of 41.6% within the categories.

Table 4.4: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	55	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Married	68	54.4	54.4	98.4
	Divorce	1	0.8	0.8	99.2
	Separated	1	0.8	0.8	100
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.4 shows that 125 respondents whose responses were used for the analysis, 55(44.0%) of the respondents were single while 68(54.4%) of the respondents were married, 1(0.8%) of the respondents was divorce and 1(0.8%) of the respondents was separated. This implies that majority of the respondents are married people.

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Table 4.5: Status Distribution of Respondents

Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Mgt	18	14.4	14.4	14.4
Senior	58	46.4	46.4	60.8
Junior	49	39.2	39.2	100
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.5 demonstrates the position of the respondents that 18(14.4%) are of the management staff, 58(46.4%) are senior officers and 49(39.2%) are junior staff. It can be concluded based on the above analysis that more of the respondents are senior members of staff.

Table 4.6: Working Years of Experience of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-2years	26	20.8	20.8	20.8
2-5years	36	28.8	28.8	49.6
6-9years	33	26.4	26.4	76.0
Above 10years	30	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.6 reveals the length of service in terms of the number of years, which the respondents have spent in civil service, presented above that 26(20.8%) of the respondents of have spent 0 – 2years in government service, 36(28.8%) indicated 2 – 5years, 33(26.4%) indicated 6– 9years and 30(24.0%) indicated above 10years. This implies that majority of most of the respondents have 2-5 years working experience.

Table 4.7: Educational Distribution of Respondents

Educational	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Diploma/NCE	6	4.80	4.80	4.80
B.Sc/HND	95	76.0	76.0	80.8
M.Sc/MBA	16	12.8	12.8	93.6
PhD	8	6.40	6.40	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.7 shows the analysis of the responses retrieved, of the 125 respondents whose responses were used for the analysis, 6(4.80%) of the respondents have Diploma/NCE qualifications, 95(76.0%) have B.Sc/HND qualifications, while 16(12.8%) of them have M. Sc/MBA and 8(6.40%) were with PhD qualifications. This implies that majority of most of the respondents have HND/B.Sc.

Table 4.8: Professional Qualification of Respondents

Professional	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid ACCA	4	3.20	3.20	3.20
ACA	28	22.4	22.4	25.6
ICAN	60	48.0	48.0	73.6
ANAN	7	5.60	5.60	79.2
NIL	26	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.8 exposes the analysis of the responses retrieved of the 125 respondents whose responses were used for the analysis, 4(3.20%) of the respondents have ACCA, 28(22.4%) of the respondents were with ACA, 60(48.0%) of the respondents have ICAN while 7(5.60%) were also with ANAN, 26(20.8%) of the respondents are with no qualifications. This implies that most of the respondents have ICAN.

Table 4.9: Inadequate use of Tax Instruments Lead to corruption in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	69	55.2	55.2	55.2
Agree	51	40.8	40.8	96.0
Disagree	3	2.40	2.40	98.4
Strongly Disagree	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.9 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 69(55.2%) strongly agree and 51(40.8%) agree that there inappropriate use of Tax instruments lead to corruption in Nigeria, while 3(2.40%) disagree and 2(1.60%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that there existence of inappropriate use of Tax instruments lead to corruption in Nigeria.

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Table 4.10: High Tax Rate Results in Crimes and Corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	36	28.8	28.8	28.8
	Agree	62	49.6	49.6	78.4
	Disagree	21	16.8	16.8	95.2
	Strongly Disagree	6	4.80	4.80	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.10 illustrates that out of 125 respondents, 36(28.8%) and 62(49.6%) agree that high Tax rate results in crimes and corruption, while 21(16.8%) disagree and 6(4.80%) strongly disagree with the statement. The result of the findings revealed that high Tax rate results in crimes and corruption.

Table 4.11: Good Tax Personnel can help Curbing Corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	55	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Agree	50	40.0	40.0	84.0
	Disagree	17	13.6	13.6	97.6
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.40	2.40	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.11 shows that out of 125 respondents, 55(44.0%) strongly agree and 50(40.0%) agree that a good Tax personnel can help in curbing corruption, while 17(13.6%) disagree and 3(2.40%) strongly disagree with the statement. The result of the finding shows that good tax personnel can help in curbing corruption.

Table 4.12: Reductions in Corruption can be Achieved through Coercion of Tax Payers to Pay Tax

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	25	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	47	37.6	37.6	57.6
	Disagree	45	36.0	36.0	93.6
	Strongly Disagree	8	6.40	6.40	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.12 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 25(20.0%) strongly agree and 47(37.6%) agree that reduction in corruption can be achieved through coercion of tax payers to pay tax, while 45(36.0%) disagree and 8(6.40%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that reduction in corruption can be achieved through coercion of tax payers to pay taxes.

Table 4.13: Corruption reduces tax revenue and the effectiveness of various financial assistance programmes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	47	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Agree	43	34.4	34.4	72.0
	Disagree	30	24.0	24.0	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	5	4.00	4.00	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.13 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 47(37.6%) strongly agree and 43(34.4%) agree that corruption reduces Tax revenue and the effectiveness of various financial assistance programs, while 30(24.0%) disagree and 5(4.00%) strongly disagree with the statement. This implies that corruption reduces Tax revenue and the effectiveness of various financial assistance programmes.

Table 4.14: Forensic Accountants' Activities Aid Curbing of Corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	55	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Agree	63	50.4	50.4	94.4
	Disagree	7	5.60	5.60	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.14 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 55(44.0%) strongly agree and 63(50.4%) agree that Forensic Accountants activities aid curbing of corruption, while 7(5.60%) disagree and no one strongly disagree with the statement. It can be concluded that Forensic Accountants' activities aid curbing of corruption.

Table 4.15: Lack of Working Equipment Affects Effectiveness of Forensic Accountants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	54	43.2	43.2	43.2
	Agree	62	49.6	49.6	92.8
	Disagree	6	4.80	4.80	97.6
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.40	2.40	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

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Table 4.15 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 54(43.2%) strongly agree and 62(49.6%) agree that lack of working equipments affects effectiveness of Forensic Accountants, while 6(4.80%) disagree and 3(2.40%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that lack of working equipments affects effectiveness of Forensic Accountants.

Table 4.16: Forensic Accountants are relevant in eradication of crimes and corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	45	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Agree	67	53.6	53.6	89.6
	Disagree	13	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.16 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 45(36.0%) strongly agree and 67(53.6%) agree that Forensic Accountants are relevant in eradication of crimes and corruption, while 13(10.4%) disagree and none of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. This finding implies that Forensic Accountants are relevant in eradication of crimes and corruption.

Table 4.17: Lack of Qualified Forensic Accountants have Effect on Increasing Corrupt Practices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	46	36.8	36.8	36.8
	Agree	53	42.4	42.4	79.2
	Disagree	19	15.2	15.2	94.4
	Strongly Disagree	7	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.17 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 46(36.8%) strongly agree and 53(42.4%) agree that lack of qualified Forensic Accountants has effect on increasing corrupt practices, while 19(15.2%) disagree and 7(5.6%) strongly disagree with the statement. It can be concluded based on the above analysis that lack of qualified Forensic Accountants has effect on increasing corrupt practices.

Table 4.18: Proper Financial Management helps to Reduce Crime Rate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	61	48.8	48.8	48.8
	Agree	60	48.0	48.0	96.8
	Disagree	3	2.40	2.40	99.2
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.80	0.80	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.18 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 61(48.8%) strongly agree and 60(48.0%) agree that proper Financial management will help to reduce crime rate, while 3(2.40%) disagree and 1(0.80%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that proper financial management helps to reduce crime rate.

Table 4.19: Services of Forensic Accountants are preferable in curbing socio-economic evils and financial crimes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	28	22.4	22.4	22.4
	Agree	88	70.4	70.4	92.8
	Disagree	9	7.20	7.20	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.19 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 28(22.4%) strongly agree and 88(70.4%) agree that services of Forensic Accountants are preferable in curbing socio- economic evils and financial crimes, while 9(7.20%) disagree and none of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that the services of Forensic Accountants are preferable in curbing socio- economic evils and financial crimes.

Table 4.20: Qualified Accountants and Auditors are of great help in Eradication of Corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	60	48.0	48.0	48.0
	Agree	55	44.0	44.0	92.0
	Disagree	10	8.00	8.00	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.20 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 60(48.0%) strongly agree and 55(44.0%) agree that qualified Accountants and Auditors are great help in eradication of corruption, while 10(8.00%) disagree and no one of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that qualified Accountants and Auditors are of great help in eradication of corruption.

Table 4.21: Forensic Accountants help in detecting and preventing frauds in the public sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	52	41.6	41.6	41.6
	Agree	70	56.0	56.0	97.6
	Disagree	3	2.40	2.40	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

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Table 4.21 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 52(41.6%) strongly agree and 70(56.0%) agree that Forensic Accountants helps in detecting and preventing frauds in the public sector, while 3(2.40%) disagree and none of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that Forensic Accountants help in detecting and preventing frauds in the public sector.

Table 4.22: Effective use of Forensic Accountants will reduce the rate of Financial Crimes in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	48	38.4	38.4	38.4
Agree	66	52.8	52.8	91.3
Disagree	11	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.22 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 48(38.4%) strongly agree and 66(52.8%) agree that effective use of Forensic Accountants will reduce the rate of financial crimes in Nigeria, while 11(8.8%) disagree and none of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that effective use of Forensic Accountants will reduce the rate of financial crimes in Nigeria.

Table 4.23: Periodic Auditing of Financial Statements helps to Curb Corruption

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	58	46.4	46.4	46.4
Agree	59	47.2	47.2	93.6
Disagree	7	5.6	5.6	99.2
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.23 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 58(46.4%) strongly agree and 59(47.2%) agree that periodic auditing of financial statements helps to curb corruption, while 7(5.6%) disagree and 1(0.8%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that periodic auditing of financial statements helps to curb corruption.

Table 4.24: EFCC are Best Suited to Address Problem of Corruption in Nigeria.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	45	36.0	36.0	36.0
Agree	54	43.2	43.2	79.2

Disagree	20	16.0	16.0	95.2
Strongly Disagree	6	4.80	4.80	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.24 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 45(36.0%) strongly agree and 54(43.2%) agree that EFCC are best suited to address problem of corruption in Nigeria, while 20(16.0%) disagree and 6(4.80%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that EFCC are best suited to address problem of corruption in Nigeria.

Table 4.25: Adequate funding by the Federal Government Provide for Effective Operation of Anti-Graft Agencies in Nigeria.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	40	32.0	32.0	32.0
Agree	74	59.2	59.2	91.2
Disagree	10	8.00	8.00	99.2
Strongly Disagree	1	0.80	0.80	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.25 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 40(32.0%) strongly agree and 74(59.2%) agree that adequate funding by the federal government provide for effective operation of anti-graft agencies in Nigeria, while 10(8.00%) disagree and 1(0.80%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that adequate funding of government provides for effective operation of anti-graft agencies in Nigeria.

Table 4.26: There will be growth in Nigerian Economy if Corruption is Eradicated

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	96	76.8	76.8	76.8
Agree	25	20.0	20.0	96.8
Disagree	3	2.40	2.40	99.2
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.26 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 96(76.8%) strongly agree and 25(20.0%) agree that there will be growth in Nigerian economy if corruption is eradicated, while 3(2.40%)

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disagree and 1(0.80%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that there will be growth in Nigerian economy if corruption is eradicated.

Table 4.27: Litigation support service helps in improving eradication of mismanagement of public funds

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	42	33.6	33.6	33.6
	Agree	79	63.2	63.2	96.8
	Disagree	4	3.2	6.3	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.27 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 42(33.6%) strongly agree and 79(63.2%) agree that litigation support service helps in improving eradication of mismanagement of public funds, while 4(3.20%) disagree; none of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that litigation support service helps in improving eradication of mismanagement of public funds.

Table 4.28: Intervention of Anti-Graft Agencies can Prevent Crimes and Corruption in Nigeria.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	42	33.6	33.6	33.6
	Agree	70	56.0	56.0	89.6
	Disagree	9	7.20	7.20	96.8
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.20	3.20	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2019.

Table 4.28 reveals that out of 125 respondents, 42(33.6%) strongly agree and 70(56.0%) agree that intervention of anti-graft agencies can prevent crimes and corruption in Nigeria, while 9(7.20%) disagree and 4(3.20%) strongly disagree with the statement. The implication of this finding is that intervention of anti-graft agencies can prevent crimes and corruption in Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Activities of Tax Practitioners do not influence the corrective measures in areas of corruption and financial crimes eradication in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.1 Correlations

		Reductions in corruption can be achieved through coercion of Taxation on the whole.
Inappropriate use of Tax instruments lead to corruption in Nigeria.	Pearson Correlation	.256*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
	N	96
Reductions in corruption can be achieved through coercion of Tax payers on the whole.	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
	N	96

Source: SPSS Computation, Version 20.0,2019

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2.1 above represent the result of the Pearson Correlation ran on hypothesis one formulated for this study. The data provided that there is a positive relationship between the existence of inappropriate use of tax instruments which lead to corruption in Nigeria and reduction in corruption can be achieved through coercion of tax payers at 0.256 coefficient. The probability value of 0.012 is less than 0.05, that is, $0.05 > 0.012$ which suggests that there are activities of Tax Practitioners influence corrective measure in areas of corruption and crimes eradication in Nigeria.

Decision Rule

Reject H_0 if the alpha value is greater than P-value.

Decision

Since $0.05 > 0.012$ we therefore reject null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis, which state that there are activities of Tax Practitioners curbed corruption in Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H02: Forensic Accounting has no significant relationship with good corporate governance for public confidence and eradication of crimes and corruption in Nigeria.

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Table 4.2.2 Correlations

	Forensic Accounting activities aids at curbing corruption.	Proper financial management will help to reduce crime rate.
Forensic Accounting activities aids at curbing corruption.	1	.064
Sig. (2-tailed)		.537
N	96	96
Proper financial management will help to reduce crime rate.	.064	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.537	
N	96	96

Source: *SSPS Computation, Version 20.0,2019*

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 4.2.2 above represents the result of the Pearson Correlation ran on hypothesis two formulated for this study. The data provided that there is a positive relationship between Forensic Accounting activities curbing corruption and proper financial management which will help to reduce crimes rate at 0.064 coefficients. The probability value of 0.537 is greater than 0.05 that is $0.537 > 0.05$, which suggests that there is a significant relationship between the variables.

Decision Rule

Reject H_0 if the alpha value is greater than P-value.

Decision

Since $0.537 > 0.05$ we therefore reject null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis, which state that activities of Forensic Accountants curbed financial crime and corruption in Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H_0 : Forensic Accounting cannot fill the gap created by traditional auditing style in curbing the socio-economic evils of economic and financial crimes.

Table 4.2.3 Correlations

	Periodic Auditing of financial statements helps at curbing corruption.	Qualified Accountants and Auditors we be of great things in eradication of corruption.
Periodic Auditing of financial statements helps at curbing corruption.	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed) N 96	.272** .007 96
Qualified Accountants and Auditors we be of great things in eradication of corruption.	Pearson Correlation .272** Sig. (2-tailed) N 96	1 96

Source: SPSS Computation, Version 20.0, 2019

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2.3 above represent the results of the Pearson Correlation ran on hypothesis three formulated for this study. The data provided that there is positive relationship between periodic auditing of financial statements at curbing corruption and qualified Accountants and Auditors we be of great helps in eradication of corruption at 0.272 coefficients. The probability value of 0.007 is less than 0.05, that is, $0.05 > 0.007$ which suggests that there is no significant relationship between the variables.

Decision Rule

Reject H_0 if the alpha value is greater than P-value.

Decision

Since $0.05 > 0.007$ we therefore reject null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis, which state that activities of Forensic Accountants can fill the gap created by traditional auditing style in curbing the socio-economic evils of economics and financial crimes.

Test of Hypothesis Four

H_0 : Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) does serve a preventive agency in curbing corruption in Nigeria.

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Table 4.2.4 Correlations

	EFCC are best suited to addressing corruption in Nigeria.	There will be growth in Nigeria economy if corruption reduces.
EFCC are best suited to addressing corruption in Nigeria.	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed) N 96	.260* .011 96
There will be growth in Nigeria economy if corruption reduces.	Pearson Correlation .260* Sig. (2-tailed) N 96	1 96

Source: SSPS Computation, Version 20.0, 2019

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2.4 above represents the results of the Pearson Correlation ran on hypothesis four formulated for this study. The data provided that there is positive relationship between EFCC are best suited to address corruption problem in Nigeria and there will be growth in Nigerian economy if corruption is eradicated 0.260 coefficients. The probability value of 0.011 is less than 0.05, that is, $0.05 < 0.011$ which suggests that there is a significant relationship between the variables.

Decision Rule

Reject H_0 if the alpha value is greater than P-value.

Decision

Since $0.05 < 0.011$ we therefore reject null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis, which state that Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) serve as a preventive agency in curbing corruption in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between the existence of inappropriate use of Tax instruments lead to corruption in Nigeria and reductions in corruption can be achieved through coercion of Taxation on the whole. Therefore, the existence of inappropriate use of Tax instruments lead to corruption in Nigeria and reductions in corruption can be achieved through coercion of taxation on the whole. This is due to the fact alpha value is greater than P-value ($0.05 > 0.012$). Tax administration plays a key role in ensuring that the right amount of Tax is collected at the right time and at minimal cost, while minimizing the burden to both the government and tax-payers (USAID 2013). Tax officials thus are

responsible for the administration of Tax collection and enforcement, including the registration and removal of Tax-payers from the national registry, the collection of Tax dues (filling, payment and processing), the identification of Tax liabilities and the inspection and prosecution of alleged Tax offences (Bridi, as cited in Maíra Martin 2009). In addition, Tax officers also play an important role in combating corruption as in the course of their work they may uncover corruption and other wrongdoings (OECD 2014).

Within this framework effective, efficient and capable Tax authorities that uphold the highest ethical standards are instrumental to mobilise and administer domestic fiscal resources, enabling countries to provide basic services (Magashula as cited in Maíra Martin 2009). There is also evidence that corruption in Tax administration takes place in a more organised manner with Tax Officials and Tax-payers acting together to systematically evade Taxes (Kabera 2008). For instance, the 2009 Global Corruption Report found that some high-ranking Tax Officials were covering up Tax evasion and conducting secret dealings (Transparency International 2009). Understanding the main drivers of corruption in Tax administration is essential to determining the approaches to be used to tackle it. There is a broad consensus in the literature regarding the main factors that contribute to corruption in Tax Administration more broadly. These include the complexity of Tax laws and procedures, the monopoly, power and degree of discretion of Tax Officials, the lack of adequate monitoring and supervision, and the overall environment in the public sector.

Hypothesis two results indicate that there is a significant relationship between Forensic Accounting activities aids at curbing corruption and proper Financial management will help to reduce crimes rate. The result of this test also states that Forensic Accounting activities aids at curbing corruption. This is due to the fact alpha value is greater than P-value ($0.537 > 0.05$). Forensic Accounting encompasses both litigation support and investigative accounting. Litigation support provides assistance of all nature in a matter involving existing or pending litigation. It deals primarily with issues related with the quantification of economic damages, while investigative accounting is associated with the investigation of criminal matters (Zysman, Owojori and Asaolu, as cited in Romanus 2014).

Under litigation support, Forensic Accountant assists in; obtaining document necessary to support or refute a claim and reviewing of the relevant documentation to form an initial assessment of the case in an identified area of loss, attendance at the examination for discovery or to review the testimony, assists with understanding the financial issues to formulate additional question to be asked, review factual situation and provides suggestion regarding possible course(s) of action, assists with protection and recovering of assets under criminal investigation, which are usually on behalf of the police with the aim of presenting evidence in a professional and concise manner. While the investigative support include; shareholders and partnership dispute that involve analysis of numerous year financial record for valuation and qualification of the issue in dispute, personal injury claim, where for example economic losses from motor accidents or wrongful dismissal may need to be quantified, business interruption and other type of insurance claim, these assignment involve a detailed review of policy to investigate coverage issues and the appropriate methods of calculating the loss, business employee fraud investigation which can involve fraud tracing, asset identification and recovery, intelligence gathering and due diligence review, professional negligence, to ascertain the breach and quantify the loss involve and mediation and arbitration, as a form of

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alternative dispute resolution. Several instances of corporate scandals and failure in the recent past have put the professional accounting bodies into a new perception that goes beyond the traditional statutory audit. There is need to respond to this changing criminal threat and the skills of non-traditional investigators like the Accountant and legal experts are needed to combat the corporate ill, this has increased the quest for the services of the Forensic Accountant.

The test of hypothesis three, it was revealed that there significant relationship between the periodic auditing of financial statements helps at curbing corruption and qualified Accountants and Auditors we are of great things in eradication of corruption. This is due to the fact alpha value is greater than P-value ($0.05 > 0.007$). Forensic Accountant apply Accounting, Auditing and investigating skills in detecting fraud and present litigation support service in the court. Forensic Accountant are train to look beyond mere numbers and deals with business reality. Forensic Accounting is a special practice area of accounting that describes engagements that result from actual or anticipated disputes or litigation. Forensic Accountant refers to a certified public Accountant who performs an orderly analysis in an attempt to obtain the truth and which to form an expert opinion. Forensic Accounting comprises litigation support, investigation and dispute resolution.

The increase in number of bribery and fraudulent activities in Nigeria, and around the world has emphasized the need for the application of Forensic Accounting technique. This technique can be employed to effectively investigate and detect cases of bribery in Nigeria. Forensic Accounting until recently, was usually hidden away in the investigations department. He added that the increase in the visibility of Forensic Accounting can be seen as a by - product of economic recession as companies have not only become more litigious as their profit margins are squeezed, but claims have also become grossly inflated with the result that bringing a financial mind to bear on the figures can have a rapidly deflating effect on them. Solicitors and barristers are influenced by the proven ability of an Accountant to given expert witness in a professional manner. In his opinion, Forensic Accountants should be involved at an early stage in the dispute, since his advice on the probable quantum of a claim may assist in deciding whether it is cost effective to proceed with legal action or not.

Hypothesis four results indicate that there is a significant relationship between EFCC are best suited to addressing corruption in Nigeria and increase growth in Nigeria economy if corruption reduces. In nutshell, the study confirmed relationship between EFCC is best suited to addressing corruption in Nigeria and economy growth. This is due to the fact alpha value is greater than P-value ($0.05 > 0.011$). From the above historical records, it seems that all the efforts of the past administrations did not achieve reduction in the level of corrupt practices hence; this study was on how investigation of corruption can be effective for successful prosecution of the culprits with the employment of forensic accounting technique by the major anti-graft Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria. Forensic accounting technique is fast becoming popular in providing evidence in the prosecution of corruption and in disputes resolution. It provides an accounting analysis that is suitable to the court which will form the basis for discussion, debate and ultimately dispute resolution. Forensic Accounting encompasses both litigation support and investigative accounting. Ribadu as cited in Dada (2014) opined that cases that involve economic and financial crimes are often intricate and involves papers and subjects

that are technical and also requires an investigator that is well-schooled to unearth it. Adegbe and Fakile cited in Dada (2014) asserted that forensic accounting is a financial (monetary) move towards controlling and resolving crimes (economic and financial) in the economy of Nigeria. To them, in the financial statements Forensic Accounting provides investigative accounting. Emergence of Forensic Accounting in recent times was in response to the development of the rising occurrence of frauds and malpractices in corporate management.

Summary

Based on the review conducted on related literature and the analysis with interpretation of data obtained, the following facts were established from the study:

- i. Fraud and corrupt practices are common especially in developing countries and they have negative impact on such economies. Also found out that the services of Forensic Accountants are required in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy and their services are much required for fraud and corruption related issues.
- ii. Inappropriate use of tax instruments lead to corruption in Nigeria.
- iii. Forensic Accounting as a field in accounting has a vital role to play in protection of Nigeria's against financial and economic fraud.
- iv. This study revealed that Forensic accounting combines accounting, Auditing and investigating skills in detecting, preventing and provide valid evidence used against prosecutors in Nigerian's court, (Amake and Ikhatua, 2016).

Conclusions

The study analyzed why attention has to be given to the question of fraud investigation in the public sector of Nigeria by Anti-Corruption Agencies with the aid of Forensic Accountants. It should be emphasized that whether within the business world or in the public sector, the ultimate responsibility for investigating fraud cases rests with Anti-Corruption Agencies while discouraging and preventing fraud and corrupt practices rest with the government and management.

Above all, result of the study revealed that Forensic Accounting skills and techniques have significant effect on uncovering fraud in the Nigerian public sector and Forensic Accounting skills and techniques has influence on reducing fraud in the Nigerian public sector . We conclude as follows: (i) Forensic Accounting practice is neither new to the developed nor is it in developing nations; (ii) that fraud in the Nigerian public sector is alarming and is not only crumbling the economy but also affecting the standard of living and image of Nigerian citizens; (iii) that the Applications of Forensic Accounting skills and techniques have contributed greatly to Anti-Corruption Agencies in Nigeria in the investigation of complex fraud cases particularly EFCC and ICPC as more money has so far been recovered.

Recommendations

Based on the findings enumerated above, the following are some recommendations which will improve the activities of Tax Practitioners, Forensic Accountants and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission at curbing Corruption in Osun State, Nigeria:

- i. Professional Accounting bodies should constantly conduct Forensic Accounting training for Accountants.
- ii. Nigerians should embrace integrity, objectivity, fairness and accountability in their daily

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- activities.
- iii. Forensic Accountants as expert witnesses should at all times bring their education, training, skills, or experience to bear so that their specialized opinions about an evidence or fact issued within the scope of their expertise should assist in fact-finding.
 - iv. Anti-graft agencies should consider engaging the services of Forensic Accountants to assist them in court cases involving economic or financial crimes.
 - v. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Association of National Accountants of Nigeria and the National Universities Commission should encourage formalization and specialization in the field Forensic Accounting.
 - vi. There is need for the inclusion of Forensic Accounting in the syllabus of all the tertiary institutions offering Accounting in Nigeria. Professional accountancy bodies should also include the course in their syllabi.
 - vii. There should be more Forensic Accountants' involvement in fraud detection in order to reduce the rate of financial crimes in Nigeria.
 - viii. Nigerian universities should introduce Forensic Accounting courses to increase the quality of accounting graduates from the universities.
 - ix. Action must be taken against officers found guilty. The EFCC must ensure that erring Nigerian civil servants are prosecuted when found guilty, (Ibidunni, Ibidunni, Okere and Aro, 2018).

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